ATTACHMENT P-9
ODFW EFFORT TO CLASSIFY SAGE-GROUSE CORE AREAS AS EITHER CATEGORY 1 OR 2

Technical Memorandum

To:	Nigel E. Seidel	**From:**	Matt Cambier
Company:	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	**Date:**	February 11, 2013
Project	Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project		
Re:	Process of Categorizing ODFW Sage-grouse Core Area as Category 2 Habitat under ODFW's Habitat Mitigation Policy (OAR 635-415-0000 to 0025)		
CC:	Zach Funkhouser, Idaho Power Company		

On November 30, 2012 representatives for Idaho Power Company (IPC) met with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) employees in Ontario, Oregon to review sage-grouse Core Area mapping in proximity to the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project (Project). Meeting attendees included:

- Nigel E. Seidel – ODFW B2H Project Liaison
- Philip Milburn – ODFW Malheur District Biologist
- Brian Ratliff – ODFW Grande Ronde District Biologist
- Aaron English – Tetra Tech Project Manager, representing IPC
- Matt Cambier – Tetra Tech Biologist and GIS Analyst

The goal of the meeting was to focus on portions of the IPC Proposed Corridor and alternate corridor segments that cross ODFW sage-grouse Core Area and determine whether these areas should be categorized as Category 1 or Category 2 habitats. Although Core Areas are typically classified as Category 1 habitats under the core area approach, Core Areas are designated at a landscape level and as a coarse filter to guide development; therefore, they are subject to site-specific refinements to determine appropriate habitat categorization.

To evaluate whether Core Area should be designated as Category 1 or Category 2 habitat, the core area approach requires a project-specific onsite analysis to determine:

1) Are the habitats present those upon which sage-grouse depend?
2) Is there evidence of sage-grouse presence?
3) Is the site-specific habitat both essential and irreplaceable?

If the answer to any of the above questions is no, then the area in question may not be Category 1 habitat. Accordingly, IPC requested that ODFW perform project-specific onsite analysis to determine whether sage-grouse Core Area in proximity to the Project meets the above criteria, and if it not, whether the Core Area that does not meet the above criteria should be categorized as Category 2 habitat. The intent of the meeting was not to "re-map" ODFW Core Area, but to identify areas of Core Area in proximity to the Project that do not meet the standards of Category 1 habitat.

Meeting attendees utilized GIS, with aerial photographs and vegetation data to conduct a remote

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mapping process to distinguish between Category 1 and Category 2 habitat, and determine boundaries between Category 1 and Category 2 habitat types. ODFW biologists, with support from Tetra Tech staff, identified areas within their districts that they believe do not meet the criteria for Category 1 habitat. During this meeting, two degrees of certainty were determined in regards to the accuracy of the remote mapping process that was being undertaken. One was a low degree of certainty that is labeled as 'Category 2 Core Area Pending Review' and the other was a moderate degree of certainty and is labeled as 'Category 2 Core Area' (See attached figures).

After the meeting, Philip Milburn made a site visit to the areas mapped as "Category 2 Core Area Pending Review" within the Malheur District to decide if the remote mapping process was accurate. As a result of his site visit Philip Milburn modified some of the areas that were identified in the meeting as Category 2 to Category 1 based on the presence of denser sage-brush cover that could not be identified from the aerial photographs. From this, a third degree of certainty has been attributed to the accuracy of the mapping of Category 2 Core Area. Field verification resulted in a high degree of certainty and is labeled 'Category 2 Core Area Field Verified'. Brian Ratliff has not yet been able to conduct a field verification of the mapping effort in the Grande Ronde District and ODFW has not provided a timeline for completion of this activity.

Table 1 summarizes the total acreage of Core Area that was mapped as Category 2 habitat during the meeting and subsequent field visits. Attached figures display the areas identified during the meeting.

Table 1. Acres of Core Area Identified as Category 2 Habitat

Category 2 Label	Total Acres
Category 2 Core Area Pending Review	292.2
Category 2 Core Area	18,401.8
Category 2 Core Area Field Verified	3,831.0
Total	**22,525.0**

All of the acres of Core Area identified as Category 2 habitat are at the edge of the mapped Core Area. These edges are typically at the interface of sagebrush habitats and disturbed areas such as agricultural fields or recently burned areas dominated by annual grasses, or poor-quality sage-grouse habitats such as shrublands with heavy juniper tree encroachment.

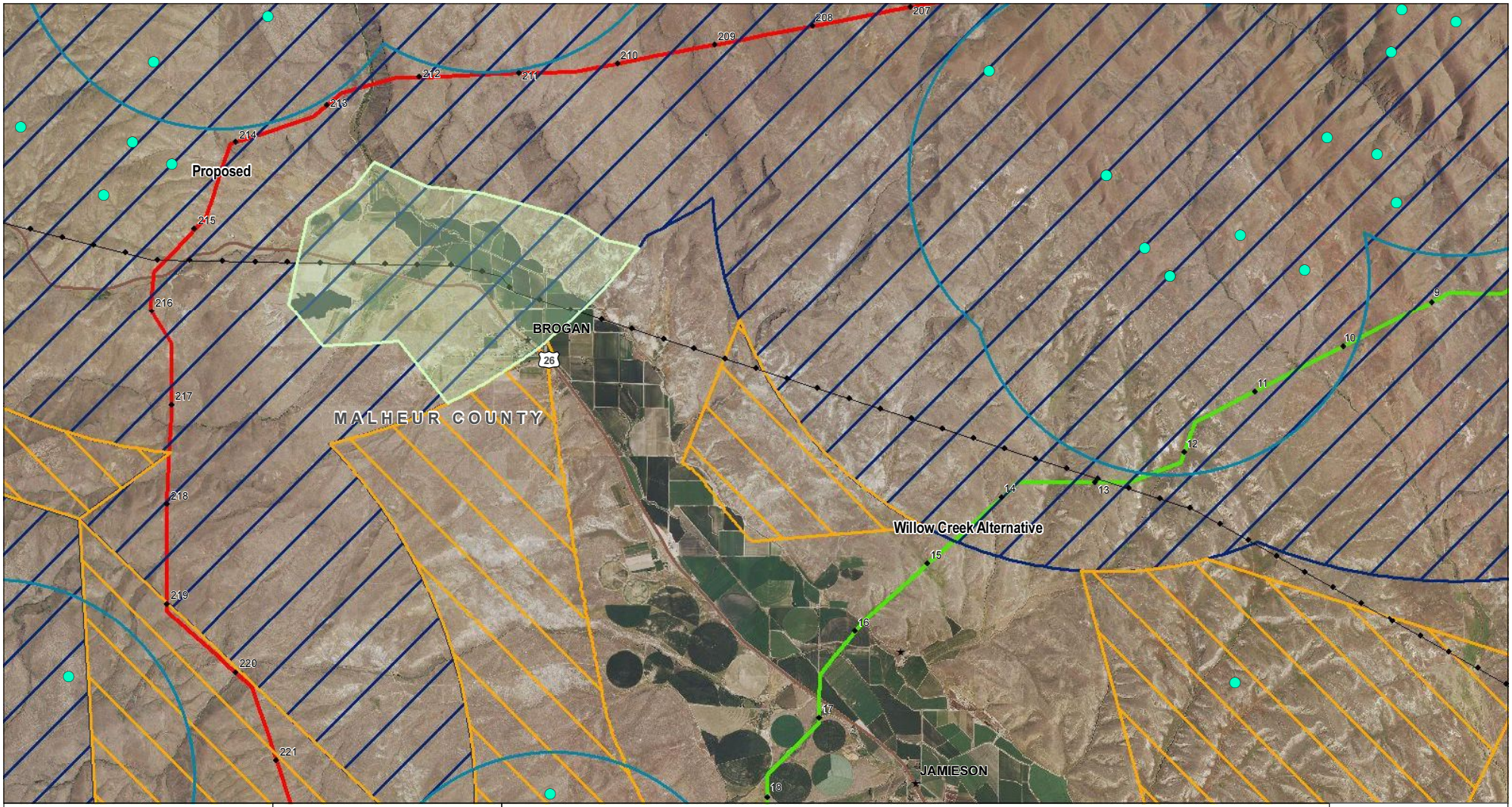
Of specific interest to IPC is where Core Areas identified as Category 2 habitat intersect the Site Boundary of the Project. Table 2 identifies the acres of Core Area identified as Category 2 habitat within the Site Boundary. The acres shown in Table 2 include the corrections to the category types based on Philip Milburn's field verification.

Table 2. Acres of Core Area Within the Site Boundary Identified as Category 2

Route	Category 2 Label	Total Acres
Proposed	Category 2 Core Area	970.3
Flagstaff	Category 2 Core Area	185.2
Willow Creek	Category 2 Core Area	16.6
Proposed	Category 2 Core Area Pending Review	2.8
	Total[1]	**1,174.9**

[1] The total acreage includes small areas of overlap (double count) where the Proposed Route and Flagstaff Alternative have overlapping features.

IPC plans to use the Core Areas identified as Category 2 habitat in Table 2 as part of the habitat categorization process and description of impacts on habitat in Exhibit P of the IPC's preliminary Application for Site Certificate. Future field verification in the Grande Ronde District may modify the categories presented here.



SAGE GROUSE CORE AREAS
CORE AREA CONSIDERED CATEGORY 2

BOARDMAN TO HEMINGWAY
500kV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
OREGON-IDAHO

DECEMBER 2012

IDAHO POWER
An IDACORP Company

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Miles

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- Sage-grouse Core Area
- Sage-grouse Low Density
- Categroy 2 Core Area
- 2-mile Buffer of Occupied or Occupied Pending Leks
- Proposed Route
- Alternative Route
- Milepost
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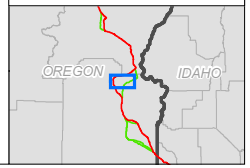
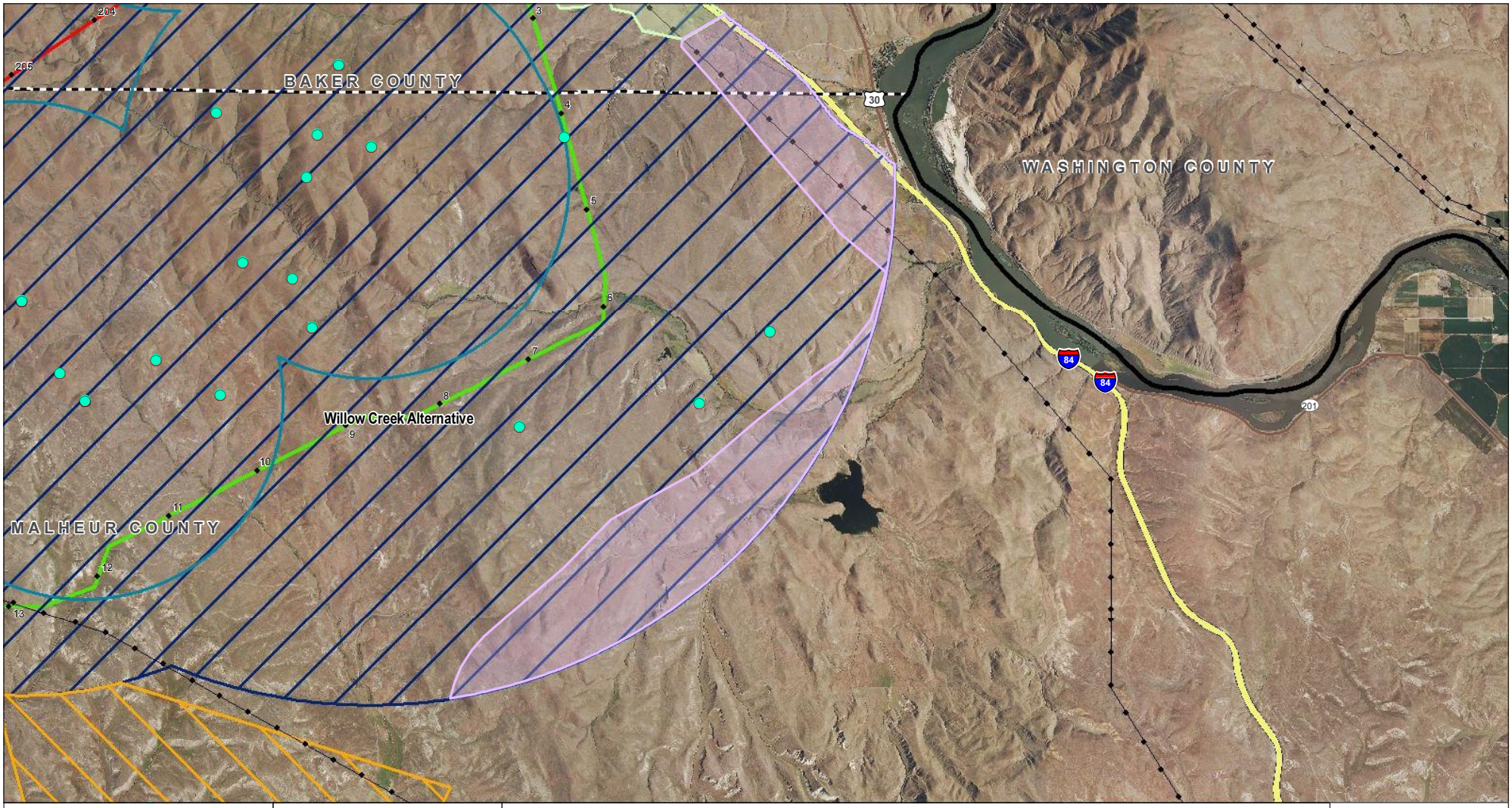
LOCATION MAP





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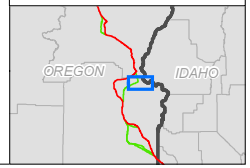

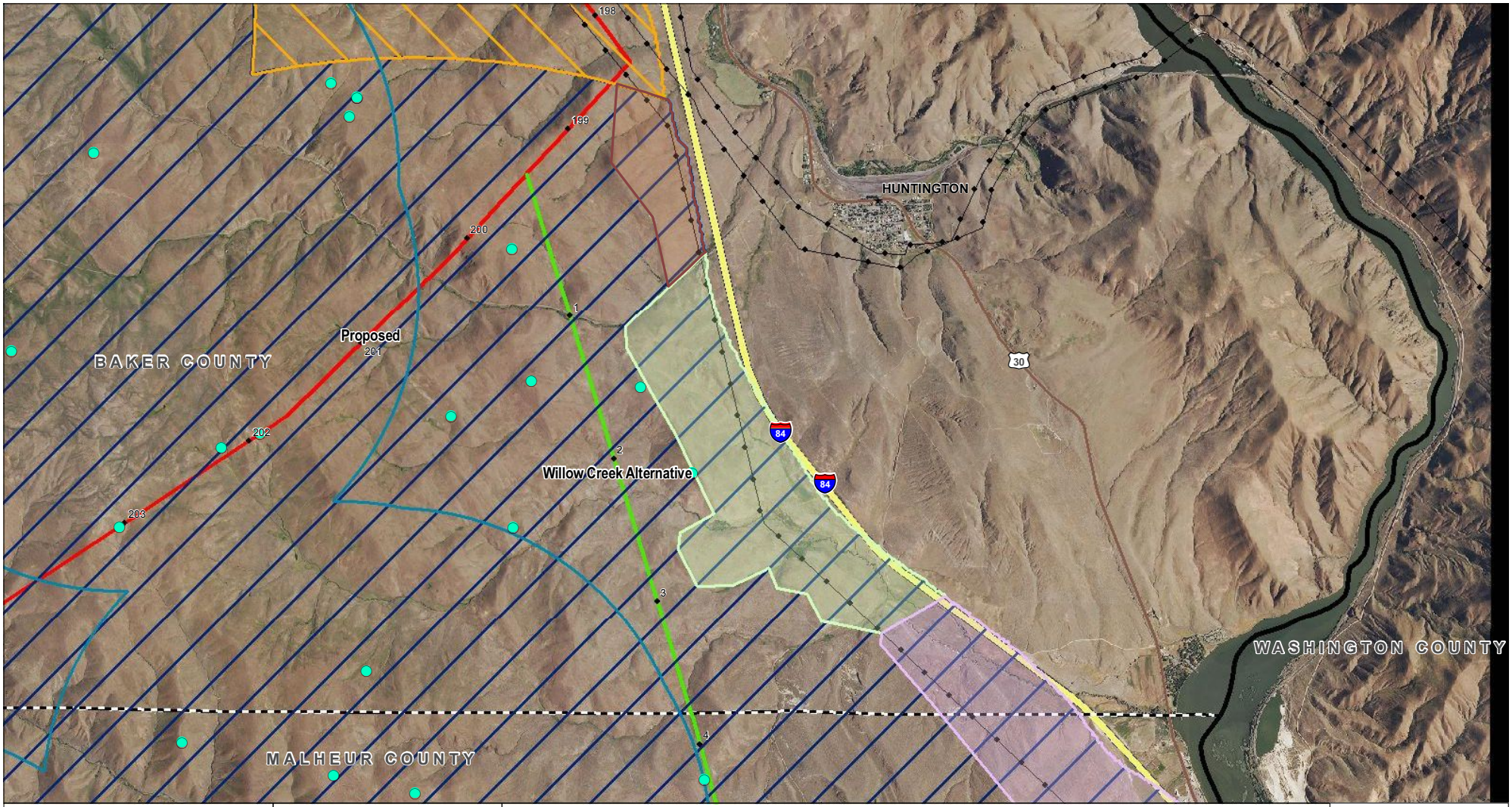

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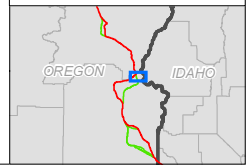

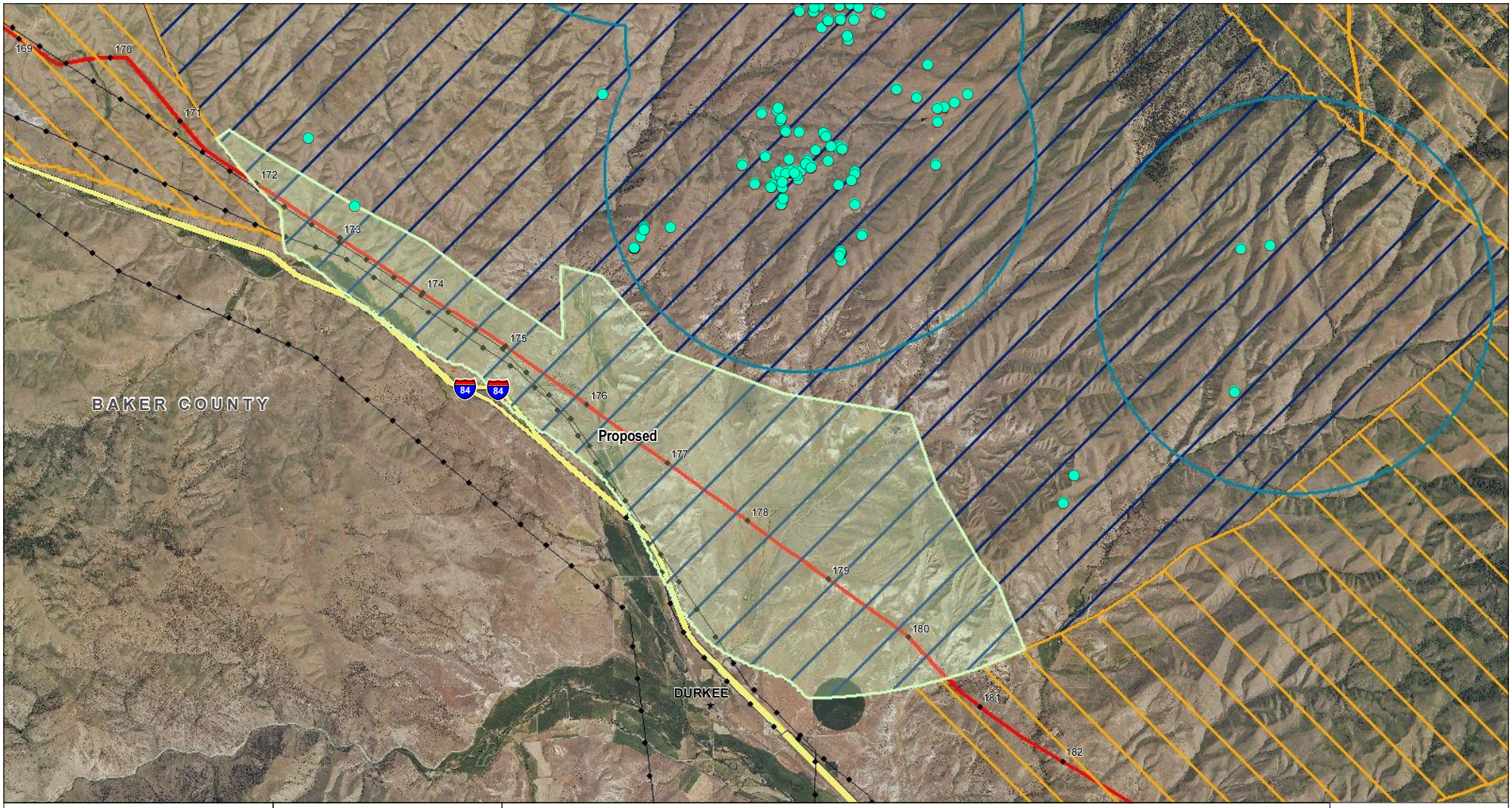

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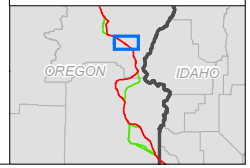

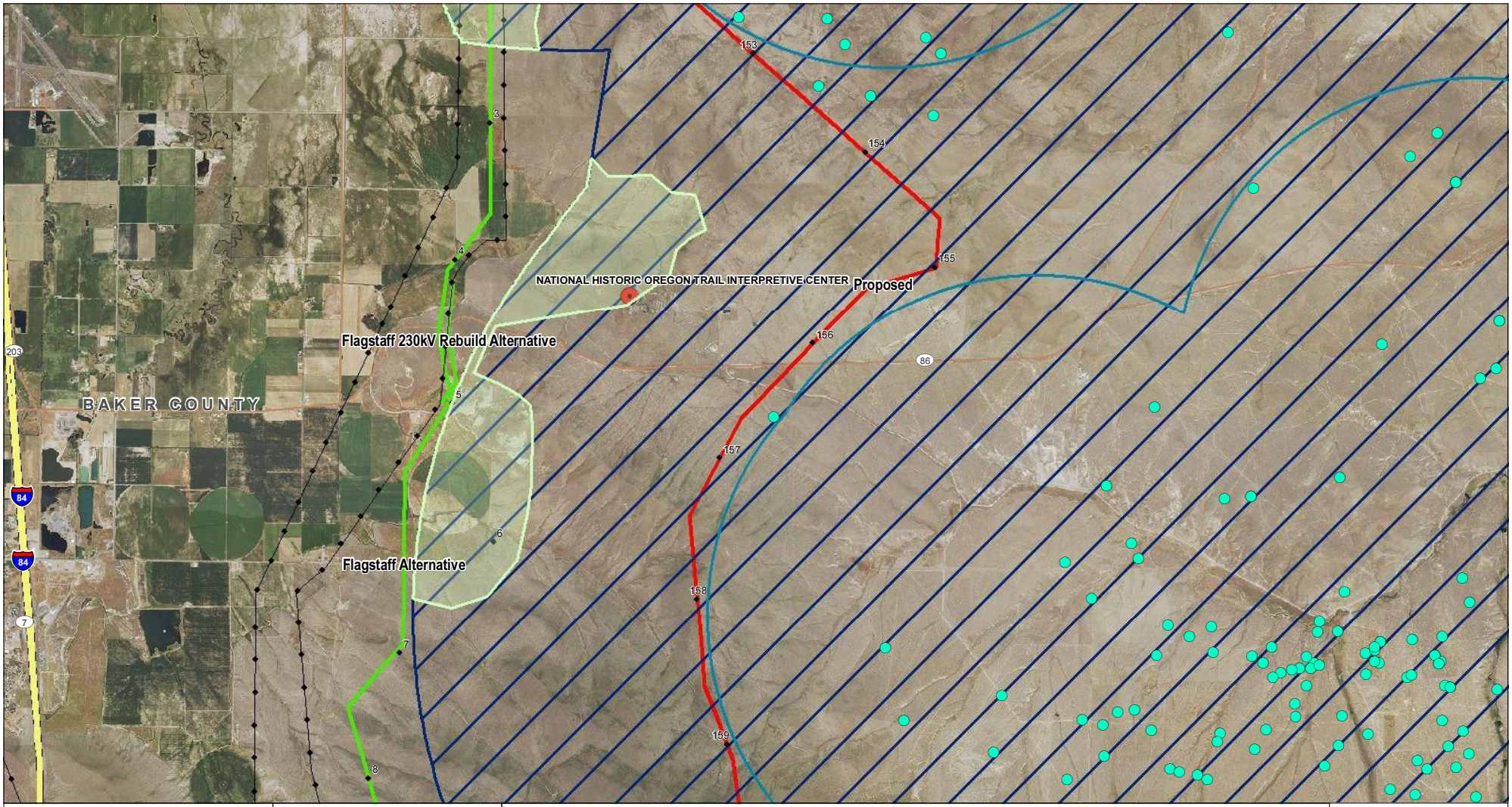

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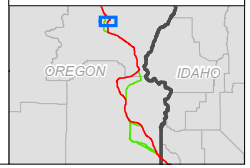

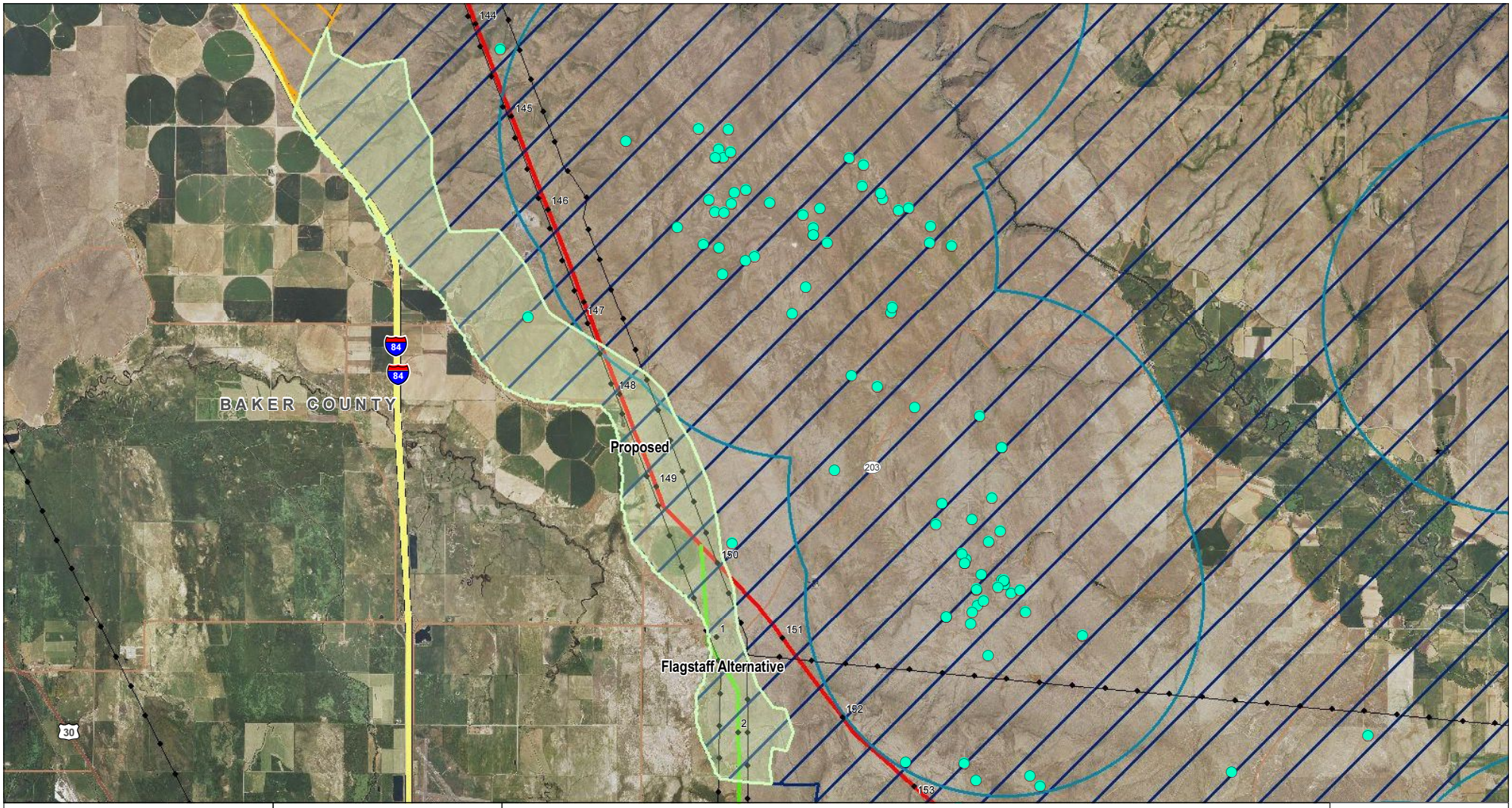

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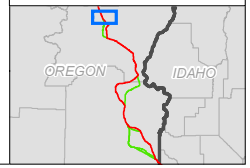
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