

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: April 7, 2006

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-293- Pilot Butte - Lapine : **Project #: V-R-06/03**)

to: Elizabeth Johnson
Natural Resource Specialist – TFR- The Dalles

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management activities will be conducted along the Right-of-Way (ROW) of the Pilot Butte - Lapine transmission line corridor from structure/mile 6/3 to the Lapine Substation. The corridor along this section of the proposed project averages 125 feet in width and crosses approximately 24 miles of high desert terrain through USFS, state, and private lands.

Location: The proposed project is located in Deschutes County, Oregon in the BPA Redmond Region

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to remove tall growing and noxious vegetation from the right of way and access roads that may potentially interfere with the operation, maintenance, and reliability of the transmission lines. Unwanted, tall growing and noxious vegetation and danger trees will be removed and/or controlled inside the ROW using manual, mechanical, and herbicide treatment. An estimated 373 acres within the Right-of-Way and 24 miles of access road will be managed.

All work will be conducted in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and the BPA Vegetation Management FEIS, dated 2000. BPA plans to manage vegetation with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon become a hazard to the transmission line. (A hazard is defined as one or more branches, tops, and/or whole trees that could fall or grow into the minimum safety zone of the transmission line(s) causing an electrical arc, relay and/or outage.) All work will be accomplished by selective vegetation control methods (except for access roads and tower sites) to ensure that there is little potential harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants.

Due to the amount of rainfall, low ground-to-conductor clearance, density and typical growth of lodge pole pine trees, the treatment cycle will be every 8-10 yrs. The same prescription as stated in the initial entry will apply for future cycles.

Analysis: A Vegetation Management Checklist was completed for this project in accordance with the requirements identified in the Bonneville Power Administrations Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285).

Section 3 of the checklist identifies the natural resources present in the area of the proposed work. The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are listed in section 3.1 of the Vegetation Management Checklist. Trees in riparian zones will be selectively cut to include only those that are within 50 feet of the conductor at maximum sag. Trees will be topped where shrubs are not present to provide shade and a silt buffer. No herbicide application is proposed near water resources. Manual vegetation management methods will be used within 50 feet on both sides of water resources. All widths will be surveyed and flagged prior to treatment. Width or distances measured from high water mark.

Threatened and Endangered Species/Essential Fish Habitat: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act, BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project will have any effects on any listed species. A species list from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was reviewed on March 15, 2006, identifying threatened and endangered species and Critical Habitat Units potentially occurring in the project area. In addition, a review of species under the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries was conducted. A determination of No Effect was made for all ESA listed species and designated critical habitat for the project.

Cultural Resources: No ground disturbing activities are planned for this project which may affect the cultural resources, however, if a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work will be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist, and the BPA archeologist will be contacted.

Monitoring: The entire project will be inspected during the work period. Additionally the line will be patrolled annually after treatment to monitor the effectiveness of the treatment and any issues associated with the project.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that (1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD, and; (2) there are no new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed actions or their impacts. This Supplement Analysis also finds the proposed actions will not affect threatened or endangered species. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ John Howington

John Howington
Physical Scientist

CONCUR: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 4-17-06

Attachment:
Vegetation Management Checklist
Effects Determination