

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: April 24, 2006

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS  
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-295- Taft-Hot Springs #1, TAFT to 22/1) **Project #: V-S-06/13**

TO: Joe Johnson  
Natural Resource Specialist – TFS/Kalispell

**Proposed Action:** Vegetation Management along the Taft-Hot Springs #1, 500 kV Transmission Line Corridor Right of Way (ROW) from Taft Substation to structure 22/1.

**Location:** The project is located in Mineral and Sanders County, Montana being in the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) Spokane Region.

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration

**Description of the Proposal:** BPA proposes to remove tall growing and noxious vegetation from the right of way and access roads that can potentially interfere with the operation, maintenance, and reliability of the transmission lines. Tall growing and noxious vegetation, danger trees and reclaim trees will be removed and/or controlled inside the ROW using selective and nonselective methods that may include hand cutting, mowing, and herbicidal treatment.

Vegetation management work will occur along selected sections of the right of way of the subject transmission line. This proposal covers the ROW width of 125 feet totaling about 333 acres of treated area.

All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. The work will provide system reliability.

**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).

Land along the project corridor consists of private industrial forest property, small woodlot owners, USFS (Kootenai NF) and State managed lands. Primary uses for lands within the project area include timber production, grazing, game hunting and recreational uses. The ROW also crosses several streams which should be considered fish bearing. No other agencies or Tribal involvement exists.

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 ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams.

The following herbicide buffers will be implemented for the project:

- For spot herbicide application, Triclopyr BEE (Pathfinder II) will be applied by hand using a 35 foot buffer from any stream, pond, wetland, or other sensitive habitat.
- For localized herbicide application, Triclopyr BEE (Pathfinder II) will be applied by hand using a 100 foot buffer from any stream, pond, wetland, or other sensitive habitat.

No drinking water, irrigation wells, or water supplies were identified along the right of way.

T&E Species and Habitats: 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 was reviewed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in April 10, 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.

The following species were identified as occurring within ½ mile of the project area: bull trout. By implementing the conservation and avoidance measures mentioned in the Effects Determination for this project, a determination of “No Effect” was made for all ESA listed species, designated critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat waters that occur in the project area.

Cultural Resources: Vegetation management activities are not anticipated to affect cultural resources. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and the appropriate tribe, the BPA Environmental Representative and the BPA archeologist will be notified.

Monitoring: The right-of-way identified in the checklist will be inspected after completion of the work to determine if all tall growing and noxious vegetation; danger trees and reclaim trees have been removed from the project area. Follow-up monitoring for vegetation control will occur one year later after completion of 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/ James R. Meyer for  
Michael A. Rosales  
Physical Scientist - Environment

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

DATE: 4-28-06

Attachment:  
Vegetation Management Checklist  
Effects Determination