

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: July 20, 2006

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-312 Drummond-Macks Inn Transmission Line Project #: **V-I-06/01**)

TO: Joe Johnson
Natural Resource Specialist – TFS/Kalispell

Proposed Action: BPA proposes to conduct vegetation control activities that include hand cutting and mechanical chipping along the entire Right-of-Way and access roads. No herbicides will be used.

Location: The transmission line is located in Fremont County, Idaho. The line is within the boundary of the Targhee National Forest with the remainder of the property in private ownership. The project is in BPA's Idaho Falls Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation along the 37-mile Drummond-Macks Inn transmission line, along 20 miles of access roads and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line. 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.) BPA's overall goal is to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation.

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. The work will provide system reliability. Debris will be disposed of using onsite chip, lop and scatter, or mulching techniques. All onsite debris will be scattered along the ROW. Removal of vegetation on slopes steeper than 30% and spanned canyons will be restricted to tall-growing species that pose a hazard to the transmission line. Trees that visually screen roads from the transmission line will be left where appropriate.

Analysis: A Vegetation Management Checklist was completed for this project in accordance with the requirements identified in the Bonneville Power Administration's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285). BPA consulted with the Targhee National Forest and they agreed that the vegetation management proposal to maintain a low-growing plant community was acceptable.

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: Waterbodies (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. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented thus eliminating the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams.

No drinking water, irrigation wells, or water supplies were identified along the rights of way for this project.

Threatened and Endangered Species: 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 obtained for federally listed, proposed and candidate species potentially occurring within the project boundaries from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) county species list (SL#-06-0825). 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.

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of NOAA database did not identify Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) streams occurring in the project area.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are known for the project area. 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.

Re-Vegetation: Native grasses are present on the entire right-of-way and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that will have lightly disturbed soil predominately located on the right-of-way roads.

Monitoring: The entire project will be inspected during the work period. Additionally, monitoring for the follow-up treatment will be conducted once each year.

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
 Frederick J. Walasavage
 Environmental Protection Specialist

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

DATE: 07-21-06

Attachment:
 Vegetation Management Checklist
 Effect Determination