

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: January 26, 2007

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP/Celilo-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-327- Malin–Hilltop and Hilltop–Warner Transmission Line
Project #: V-R-07/01

TO: Elizabeth Johnson
Natural Resource Specialist - TFE/The Dalles

Proposed Action: The project activities will be conducted along the Right-of-Way (ROW) of the Malin–Hilltop and Hilltop–Warner transmission line corridors. The corridors averages 100 feet in width and crosses approximately 74 miles of high dessert terrain through USFS, BLM, and private lands.

Location: The proposed project is located in Klamath County Oregon, and Modoc County California, in the BPA Redmond Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposed Action: During the spring of 2007, BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation along the Malin-Hilltop-Warner right-of-way, along access roads and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA Veg. 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. 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 help to provide system reliability.

BPA's goals for managing noxious weeds are to prevent and eradicate new invaders, and to control established infestations. The proposed action is designed to achieve these goals by implementing an integrated noxious weed management program within the transmission line corridor. The proposed action would involve one or a combination of management approaches including manual/mechanical, biological, and chemical methods to control noxious weeds. Determining which method(s) to use, when and how often, will be based on (but not limited to) the following factors: (1) Physical growth characteristics of target weeds (rhizomatous vs. tap-rooted, *etc.*); (2) seed longevity and germination; (3) infestation size; (4) relationship of the site to other infestations; (5) relationship of the site to listed species and/or proposed for listing under the ESA; (6) distance to surface water; (7) accessibility to site for equipment; (8) type and amount of use of the area by people; (9) effectiveness of treatment on the target weed; and (10) cost. Due to these various factors, one or several treatment methods may be needed in a given area annually for 5 or more years.

Noxious weeds would be controlled within riparian areas. Use only Garlon 3A (Triclopyr TEA) or aquatic formulations of Glyphosate (Rodeo) or Imazapyr (Habitat) for noxious weed within riparian areas. Application methods may include localized or spot treatments. No broadcast methods would be allowed within the riparian areas.

Herbicides proposed for noxious weeds outside of riparian areas include: Garlon 4(Triclopyr BEE), Tordon 22K (Picloram), Glyphosate formulations. Application methods would include localized or spot treatment and broadcast on monocultures of non-desirable species.

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). Section 3 of the checklist identifies the natural resources present in the area of the proposed work.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area is listed in section 3.1 of the Vegetation Management Checklist. Trees in riparian zones will be selectively cut to include only those that will grow into the minimum approach distances of the conductor at maximum sag. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented thus eliminating the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams. Adjacent to water resources only spot (cut-stump) and localized chemical treatments using practically non-toxic Garlon 3A or Rodeo® will be used.

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 or critical fish habitat. A species list was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on January 22, 2007, as 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.

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

Cultural Resources: No grounding disturbing activities are planned for the project. 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.

Conservation Measures: Conservation measures as identified in Section 4.1 of the Checklist shall be followed during the vegetation management efforts.

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/ James M. Kehoe (for)
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 1-30-07

Attachment:
Malin-Hilltop, Hilltop-Warner Vegetation Management Checklist
Effects Determination