

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: April 11, 2007

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS  
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-336-Palisades-Goshen Transmission line **Project #: V-I-07/01**)

TO: Joe Johnson  
Natural Resource Specialist - TFS-Kalispell

**Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to conduct vegetation control activities that include hand cutting and mechanical chipping at selected locations along the Right-of-Way (ROW) and access roads. No herbicides will be used.

**Location:** The proposed project is located in Bonneville and Bingham Counties, Idaho in the BPA Idaho Falls Region.

The project activities will be conducted at selected locations along the ROW of the Palisades-Goshen transmission line corridor from the Palisades Reservoir and ahead on line for approximately 50 miles. The ROW primarily crosses forest, agricultural and grass lands and open range.

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

**Description of the Proposal:** The Palisades-Goshen ROW corridor will be cleared in accordance with the Master Agreement Statement of Work for Vegetation Control on Bonneville Power Administration Transmission Line Rights-of-Way (MA). All access roads, structure sites, and ROW brush will be cut, loped and scattered as necessary. There are approximately 390 structures on this ROW of which approximately 50% (195) may have some vegetation control performed. This prescription is intended to control all tall growing species, reclaim trees on the ROW and danger trees adjacent to the ROW, and clear unwanted vegetation from around structures and tower sites. Approximately 50 miles of this corridor are in the vegetation control area.

All vegetation identified in the vegetation control area that can grow within 25 feet of the maximum sag position of the conductor will be managed. These include, but are not limited to; tall growing conifer, hardwood trees (e.g. Douglas-fir, true firs, hemlock, cottonwood, alder, maple) and low growing species that may interfere with the safety of the transmission line (e.g., Himalayan blackberry).

This vegetation prescription promotes low growing plant communities by selectively removing tall growing species that will become a hazard to the transmission line. As low growing plants dominate this site, they will compete with tall growing species.

Initial vegetation control will be completed by August 2007. No herbicide treatment is planned for this area at this time. This corridor is maintained for a 7-10 year cycle. Periodic monitoring/inspection will be done to assess contract compliance by the contractor. A diary of inspection results will be used to document formal inspections and will be filed with the Contracting Officer.

Debris Disposal will consist of general Cut, Lop and Scatter (CLS) in low population areas to reduce fire hazard and Cut and Chip (CC)/Mulch in higher population areas or other sensitive areas. Revegetation may be prescribed where low growing plants are not in abundance or expected to propagate naturally.

**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).

The "Environmentally Sensitive Area" section of the checklist identifies the natural resources present in the area of the proposed work. The following summarizes natural and sensitive 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 the Environmentally Sensitive Area section 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 lists was obtained for federally listed, proposed and candidate species potentially occurring within the project boundaries from the Eastern Idaho Field office, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) county species list (SP#-2007-SL-0356) was received on March 26, 2007. 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:** This corridor is maintained for a 7-10 year cycle. Periodic monitoring/inspection will be done to assess contract compliance by the contractor.

**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

CONCUR: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce      DATE: April 13, 2007

Katherine S. Pierce  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment:  
Vegetation Management Checklist  
Effects Determination