

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: December 31, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEPR-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-489) Libby Dam Area Tree Removal, Project #: **PP&A-2520**

TO: Joe Johnson
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV-Kalispell

Proposed Action: Vegetation management along the Libby Power House #1 and #2 and Libby-Bonnors Ferry #1, 115-kilovolt transmission line corridor

Location: The proposed project is located in Lincoln County, Montana, in the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) Kalispell District. The project activities would be conducted from tower 1/1 to 1/4 of the Libby Power House #1 and #2, and from tower 1/1 to 1/4 of the Libby-Bonnors Ferry #1 transmission line corridor.

Proposed by: BPA

Description of the Proposal: To comply with Western Electricity Coordinating Council Standards, BPA's overall goal is to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way (ROW) to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation. BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation along, and adjacent to, the subject transmission line corridors, tower structures and access roads. A combination of selective and nonselective vegetation control methods that may include hand cutting, mowing, and herbicidal treatment would be used to perform the work. Herbicides would be selectively applied using spot treatment (stump or stubble treatment, basal treatment, and/or spot foliar), or localized treatments (broadcast application and cut stubble treatments) with chemicals approved in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS, to ensure that the roots are killed preventing new sprouts and selectively eliminating vegetation that prevents access to the power lines. The proposed project would begin in January of 2013, with follow up work completed in the spring of 2013. Debris would be disposed of using onsite chip, lop and scatter, or mulching techniques. All onsite debris would be scattered along the ROW. Merchantable logs would be skidded and decked off-site. Land within the project area is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and BPA. The project is being coordinated with the USACE.

Analysis: The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures.

Water Resources: No ground disturbing vegetation management methods would be implemented, thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams. Only herbicides that would have "No Effect" on Pacific salmon and steelhead and their critical habitat, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and have an aquatic toxicity rating of "Practically Non-Toxic" to "Slightly Toxic," may be applied within 35 feet of water bodies and

within 100 feet of streams under the jurisdiction of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Spot or localized applications may be applied up to the water's edge.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Pursuant to its obligations under the ESA, BPA has made a determination of whether the proposed project would have an effect on any listed species. A current species list was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for threatened and endangered species potentially occurring in the project area. In addition, a review of species under the jurisdiction of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries was conducted. A determination of "No Effect" was made for federally listed ESA listed species and designated critical habitat for the project.

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of NOAA database identified Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) streams occurring in the project area. Measures identified for water resources would be followed for EFH. A determination was made that this project would have "No Effect" on EFH.

Cultural Resources: A previous survey identified a cultural site within the project area on USACE land. Information on the general site location was provided by the USACE. No ground disturbing activities are planned for this project. Additionally, all work for this project would be conducted during the winter months while the ground is frozen to further avoid potential ground disturbance. If additional sites are discovered during the course of vegetation control, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist, and the BPA archeologist will be contacted.

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/ Aaron Shurtliff

Aaron Shurtliff
Environmental Engineer

CONCUR: */s/ Katherine S. Pierce*

Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: *December 31, 2012*

Attachments:
Effects Determination