

BPA NEWS

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BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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BPA releases multi-pronged plan to mitigate wildfire risks

Plan addresses avoiding sparking wildfires and operations during fires

Portland, Oregon – The Bonneville Power Administration has released a comprehensive wildfire mitigation plan that lays out how it will keep its lines and other equipment from starting fires as well as how it will safely operate and communicate with first responders and others as wildfires burn near its equipment or rights of way.

“Wildfires are increasing in frequency and severity,” said Jeff Cook, BPA vice president of Transmission Planning and Asset Management. “This multi-pronged plan leverages our leading class vegetation management program and will help BPA consider wildfire mitigation in our asset planning strategy. The goal is not to have BPA equipment cause a wildfire and to continue to serve our customers safely and effectively when wildfires threaten BPA lines or substations.”

The 2020 plan builds on and institutionalizes wildfire mitigation efforts BPA implemented in 2019. The plan addresses a simple industry standard equation: fire = fuel + ignition source. By appropriately managing brush, trees and other potential fuel sources around its transmission lines and substations, as well as by proactively monitoring, replacing and upgrading transmission line components such as insulators and other equipment that can be potential ignition sources when they fail, BPA believes this plan will mitigate the impact of wildfires on its system.

In addition to its industry leading vegetation management practices, BPA crews routinely patrol lines to identify equipment that could possibly fail and start a wildfire. Issues identified during those patrols are repaired before wildfire season.

The plan goes beyond annual mitigation and applies risk management principles to analyze the criticality, health and risk of BPA assets as they relate to wildfires. The idea is that BPA can advance wildfire mitigation by considering hardware and equipment that performs better in fires. In this manner, BPA will consider replacing equipment in wildfire prone areas of its system sooner if it can further mitigation efforts.



“BPA is confident that our risk-informed methodology and focus on wildfire prevention will help us identify cost-effective and risk-based measures and deliver value to our customers,” said Cook.

The plan also addresses how BPA will operate and communicate with other entities during wildfires. BPA crews and dispatchers who monitor the BPA transmission system in real-time work together to keep the lights on and protect first responders during wildfires.

“Bonneville crews and dispatchers have a lot of experience dealing with the challenges presented by wildfires that threaten BPA equipment, and work closely with first responders to protect safety around our lines,” said Michelle Cathcart, vice president of BPA’s Transmission System Operations. “We don’t anticipate impacting customers by pre-emptively removing lines from service to prevent wildfires.”

BPA’s wildfire mitigation plan is available at this [link](#).

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale, carbon-free hydropower from 31 federal dams in the Columbia River Basin. It also markets the output of the region’s only nuclear plant. BPA delivers this power to more than 140 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA also owns and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage power lines and 261 substations, and provides transmission service to more than 300 customers. In all, BPA provides nearly a third of the power generated in the Northwest. To mitigate the impacts of the federal dams, BPA implements a fish and wildlife program that includes working with its partners to make the federal dams safer for fish passage. It also pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain safe, affordable, reliable electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov

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