

memorandum

DATE: February 28, 2020

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Jonah Reenders– EPI-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-736)

TO: John Tyler
Acting Chief Forester- TFBV-3

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management for the Marion Substation Microwave beam path

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project No.: 4365

Location: The project is located in Marion County, northeast of the city of Lyons, Oregon (lat: 44.7986, long: -122.7093). The beam path corridor is located on BPA and privately-owned land.

Description of the Proposal:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to clear unwanted vegetation around the Marion Substation in order to remove beam path obstructions. Microwave beam paths are used to send information quickly from point to point to help control and regulate the flow of power across the system. BPA's overall goal is to clear trees around the Marion substation in order to clear obstructions in the microwave beam path corridor. The work would be conducted in two phases in order to construct the work in appropriate weather conditions.

Phase 1 would include tree topping in order to improve microwave beam path signal strength. The cleared area would be approximately 40' x 125' with a maximum tree count of 50. The tree species is mostly Douglas fir with some miscellaneous hardwoods. Work is proposed in early to mid-February. The proposed phase 1 of the project consists of pick-up trucks carrying crews arriving on site and parking on an existing gravel road. Crews would travel by foot to the trees that need to be climbed and topped. Ropes would be used to ensure safety and chainsaws would be used to cut the top 10 to 20 feet of each tree. Noise is anticipated from the chainsaws during the tree topping. Tree tops would hit the ground, falling from the trees, approximately 50 feet. Equipment may be stacked and organized around the project area in order to use it again during Phase 2. Work is anticipated to be completed within a few hours and should all be done in a day.

Phase 2 would include a follow-up visit to cut the previously topped trees and remove debris. This work is anticipated in the spring after the ground dries in order to avoid unnecessary ground disturbance. Pick-up trucks, towing equipment, an excavator, and a chipper would arrive on-site and park on the existing gravel road. There would be minor ground disturbance from the excavator and chipper tracks to the work site along with chainsaw noise during the tree cutting. Trees would be cut using chain saws, limbed once on the ground, and bundled and dragged behind the excavator to the road where they would be loaded on a log hauling truck with the topped tree debris for transport to the mill. Minor ground disturbance would occur from dragging the logs. Work is anticipated to be completed in one to two days.

Letters, on-site meetings, emails, and phone calls would be used to notify landowners approximately three weeks prior to commencing vegetation management activities. Door hangers would also be used at properties where special treatments are anticipated. Any additional measures proposed by landowners or land managers through ongoing communication would be incorporated into the vegetation management plan during project implementation.

Analysis: Online analysis of resources was completed using Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Natural Heritage Program, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Critical Habitat, and USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (iPaC). No endangered species or habitat was present. No wetlands or other water resources are located in or around project area.

Water Resources: No aquatic resources including streams and wetlands are located within the project area. Therefore, no water resources would be impacted by the project.

Endangered Species Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project would 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). Based on the ESA review conducted and with the implementation of conservation measures outlined by the USFWS, BPA made a determination that the project would have “No Effect” for all ESA-listed species and designated critical habitat under USFWS’ jurisdiction.

BPA conducted a review of ESA-listed species and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) (as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Act), under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). No ESA-listed anadromous salmonids and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) are located within the project area; therefore, the proposed activities would have no effect on ESA-listed anadromous salmonids and EFH.

Cultural Resources: The proposed vegetation management actions do not result in ground disturbance to the physical environment, so the action is not one that typically has the potential to affect historic and/or cultural resources. If a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist and the BPA archeologist would be contacted.

Re-Vegetation: Existing naturalized grasses and woody shrubs are present on the entire ROW and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that would have lightly-disturbed soil predominantly located on the ROW roads.

Monitoring: The entire project would be inspected during the work period, early spring 2020 through early summer 2020.

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. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Jonah Reenders

Jonah Reenders

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

CONCUR:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 28, 2020

References:

Vegetation Management Prescription and Checklist

Effects Determination