

memorandum

DATE: December 9, 2020

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: EP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-762)

TO: Carlos Mora Flores
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV-ALVEY

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the Albany-Eugene No. 1, Albany-Lebanon No. 1, Alvey-Lane No. 1, Eugene-Alvey No. 2, Lane-Wendson No. 2, Reedsport-Fairview No. 1, Santiam-Albany No. 1, and Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 2 Transmission Line Corridors

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project No.: 4529

Location: Coos, Douglas, Lane, and Linn counties, Oregon

Description of the Proposal: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to clear unwanted vegetation in and adjacent to the transmission line corridors and access roads in the BPA Alvey and North Bend districts. Vegetation management needs were assessed and Vegetation Control Cut Sheets were created and compiled for the following corridors:

- 115-kilovolt (kV) Albany-Eugene No. 1 corridor from Albany Substation to Eugene Substation, excluding the spans between structures 5/8 and 25/7. This corridor includes the 115-kV Eugene-Alderwood No.1 transmission line from Eugene Substation to Alderwood Substation.
- 115-kV Albany-Lebanon No. 1 corridor from Albany Substation to Lebanon Substation, excluding the spans between structures 16/2 and 16/6.
- 230-kV Alvey-Lane No. 1 corridor from Alvey Substation to Lane Substation, excluding the spans between structures 4/4 and 5/4; 6/5 and 6/7; 11/4 and 12/1; and between 13/1 and Lane Substation. This corridor includes portions of the 115-kV Eugene-Alvey No. 2 and 115-kV Hawkins-Alvey No. 1 transmission lines.
- 115-kV Eugene-Alvey No. 2 corridor from Eugene Substation to structure 8/1, excluding the spans between structures 4/1 and 5/3. This corridor includes the 115-kV Eugene-Lane No. 1 transmission line from Eugene Substation to Lane Substation, excluding spans between structures 3/8 and Lane Substation. This corridor also includes the 115-kV Eugene-Bertelsen No. 1, 115-kV Bertelsen-Willow Creek No. 1, and 115-kV Willow Creek-Hawkins No. 1 transmission lines.
- 230-kV Lane-Wendson No. 2 corridor from Lane Substation to Wendson Substation, excluding the spans between Lane Substation and structure 4/2. This corridor includes the 115-kV Lane-Wendson No.1 transmission line from Lane

Substation to Wendson Substation, and the 115-kV Rainbow Valley Tap to Lane-Wendson No. 1 transmission line from structure 1/5 to 3/12.

- 115-kV Reedsport-Fairview No. 1 corridor from Reedsport Substation to Fairview Substation.
- 230-kV Santiam-Albany No. 1 corridor from structure 12/5 to Albany Substation, excluding the spans between structures 13/5 and 19/3.
- 230-kV Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 2 corridor from Wendson Substation to Tahkenitch Substation. This corridor includes the 115-kV Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 1 transmission line from Wendson Substation to Tahkenitch Substation, the 115-kV Tahkenitch-Gardiner No 1 Substation line from Tahkenitch Substation to Gardiner Substation, the 115-kV Tahkenitch-Reedsport No 1 from Tahkenitch Substation to Reedsport Substation.

The corridors in the proposed project area measure from 100 to 330 feet in width and cross approximately 183 miles of terrain through urban/suburban, rural residential, agricultural, private and commercial forestry, United States Forest Service – Siuslaw National Forest, Oregon Department of State Lands, and United States Bureau of Land Management – Coos Bay District and Northwest Oregon District managed lands.

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.

To comply with Western Electricity Coordinating Council standards, BPA proposes to manage vegetation with the goal of removing tall-growing vegetation that is currently or will soon become a hazard to the transmission line (a hazard is defined as one or more branches, tops, and/or whole trees that could fall or grow into the minimum safety zone of the transmission line(s) causing an electrical arc, relay and/or outage). The overall goal of BPA is to establish low-growing plant communities along the right-of-way (ROW) to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation.

A combination of selective and nonselective vegetation control methods would be used to perform the work, and may include hand cutting, mowing, herbicidal treatment, or a combination of those methods. 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 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000), to ensure that the roots are killed - preventing new sprouts - and selectively eliminating vegetation that interferes with the operation and maintenance of transmission infrastructure.

Approximately 1,747 acres of ROW, 153 structure sites, and 106 miles of access road would be initially treated in winter/spring of 2020/2021. In addition, BPA proposes to remove up to 2,115 trees in, or adjacent to, the ROW, and to remove limbs from 2,441 trees in, or adjacent to, the ROW. A follow-up treatment of re-sprouting target vegetation would be conducted on approximately 1,747 acres of ROW by fall and winter of 2021. Additional vegetation

management may be necessary in subsequent years of the vegetation management cycle in discrete areas of noxious weeds, or where BPA personnel discover vegetation that poses a hazard to the transmission line. All debris would be disposed of onsite, along the ROW, using on-site chip, lop and scatter, or mulching techniques.

Analysis: Vegetation Control Cut Sheets were developed for these corridors that incorporate the requirements identified in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS and Record of Decision (August 23, 2000). The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures outlined in the Vegetation Control Cut Sheets.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are noted in the Vegetation Control Cut Sheets. As conservation and avoidance measures, only spot and localized treatment with Garlon 3A (Triclopyr TEA) would be used within a 100-foot buffer up to the water's edge of any stream containing threatened or endangered species. Trees in riparian zones would be selectively cut to include only those that will grow into the minimum approach distances of the conductor at maximum sag; other trees would be left in place or topped to preserved shade. Shrubs that are less than 10-foot-high would not be cut where ground to conductor clearance allows. No ground-disturbing vegetation management methods would be implemented, thus eliminating the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams. Where private water wells/springs or agricultural irrigation sources have been identified along the ROW and noted in the Vegetation Control Cut Sheets, no herbicide application would occur within a 50-foot radius of the wellhead, spring, or irrigation source (164 feet when using herbicides with ground/surface water advisory).

Endangered Species Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA 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, 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). The proposed vegetation management activities are within the scope of activities and action area evaluated in the *Endangered Species Act Section 7 Programmatic Conference and Biological Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species to Administer Maintenance or Rebuild Projects for Transmission Line and Road Access Actions Authorized or Carried Out by the Bonneville Power Administration in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho* (SLOPES PBO) (WCR-2014-1600, September 22, 2016). Streams in the project area with documented presence of ESA-listed fish, designated as critical habitat for one or more species, and/or identified as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) have been noted in the Vegetation Control Cut Sheets. It was determined that, by complying with the project design criteria listed within the SLOPES PBO, potential effects to ESA-listed anadromous salmonids and EFH would be consistent with those evaluated and addressed in the SLOPES PBO.

Cultural Resources: The proposed vegetation management actions would 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 archaeologist 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, fall and winter 2020/2021 through fall and winter 2021/2022. A vendor scorecard would be used to document formal inspections and would be filed with the contracting officer.

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/ Oden Jahn
Oden W. Jahn
Environmental Scientist

CONCUR:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel DATE: December 9, 2020
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

References:
Vegetation Control Cut Sheets
Effects Determination