

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Responsible Agencies: U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA); U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS).

Title of Proposed Action: BPA/Lower Valley Transmission Project, DOE/EIS-0267

States Involved: Idaho and Wyoming.

Abstract: Bonneville Power Administration and Lower Valley Power and Light, Inc. propose to solve a voltage stability problem in the Jackson and Afton, Wyoming areas. Lower Valley buys electricity from BPA and then supplies it to the residences and businesses of the Jackson and Afton, Wyoming areas. Since the late 1980s, LVPL's electrical load has been growing by an average of 4-5 megawatts (MW) per year, and LVPL expects continued growth at about this rate. During winter, an outage of one of the BPA or LVPL transmission lines that serve these areas could cause voltage on the transmission system to dip below acceptable levels in the Jackson area and to a lesser extent in the Afton area. Low voltage levels can cause brownouts, or under certain conditions, a blackout. BPA is considering five alternatives. For the Agency Proposed Action, BPA and Lower Valley would construct a new 115-kV line from BPA's Swan Valley Substation near Swan Valley in Bonneville County, Idaho about 58 km (36 miles) east to BPA's Teton Substation near Jackson in Teton County, Wyoming. The new line would be next to an existing 115-kV line. Most of the line would be supported by a mix of single-circuit wood pole H-frame structures and single pole steel structures. About 0.8 km (0.5 mile) near Pine Creek, 4.8 km (3 miles) at Teton Pass, and 1.6 km (1 mile) near Teton Substation would be built using double-circuit structures. The Single-Circuit Line Alternative has all the components of the Agency Proposed Action except that the entire line would be supported by single-circuit wood pole H-frame structures. The Short Line Alternative has all the components of the Single-Circuit Line Alternative except it would only be half as long, from Targhee Tap near Victor in Teton County, Idaho 29 km (18 miles) east to Teton Substation. BPA would also construct a new switching station near the existing right-of-way, west or north of Targhee Tap. Targhee Tap would then be removed. For the Static Var Compensation Alternative, BPA would install a Static Var Compensator (SVC) at Teton or Jackson Substation. An SVC is a group of electrical equipment placed at a substation to help control voltage on a transmission system. The No Action Alternative assumes that no new transmission line is built, and no other equipment is added to the transmission system.

The USFS (Targhee and Bridger-Teton National Forests) must select an alternative based on their needs and objectives, decide if the project complies with currently approved forest plans, and decide if they would issue a special use permit for construction, operation, and maintenance of project facilities.

The comments received on the Draft EIS and responses to the comments are in Chapter 6.

The Final EIS looks much like the Draft EIS. Changes are underlined. Simple editorial changes and large areas that were deleted are not marked. Additional appendices have been added to respond to public comments. A listing of the general changes in each chapter is listed on the next page.

BPA expects to issue a Record of Decision (ROD) in July 1998. The Forest Service expects to issue a ROD in July 1998. Both ROD's will be mailed to agencies, groups, and individuals on the mailing list.

To request additional copies of the EIS please contact BPA's document request line: 1-800-622-4520 or write to:

Public Involvement Office

Bonneville Power Administration

P. O. Box 12999

Portland, Oregon 97212

The EIS is also available at the BPA, Environment, Fish & Wildlife Home Page: www.efw.bpa.gov/Environment/POLICIES/NEPA. Look for *AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS* and click on *BPA/Lower Valley Transmission Project*.

For more information about the EIS please contact:

Nancy Wittpenn, BPA Environmental Project Lead

P. O. Box 3621 - ECN-4

Portland, OR 97208-3621

503-230-3297 or toll-free 1-800-282-3713

E-mail: nawittpenn@bpa.gov

Cheryl Probert, U.S. Forest Service Forest Planner

Targhee National Forest

P.O. Box 208

St. Anthony, Idaho 83445-0208

208-624-3151

E-mail: cprobert/r4_targhee@fs.fed.us

For more information on DOE NEPA activities contact: Carol Borgstrom, Director Office of NEPA Oversight, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20585, 1-800-472-2756, DOE NEPA WEB site: www.eh.doe.gov/nepa/.

Summary of Changes in the Final EIS

Chapter 1

Information about comments received on the Draft EIS has been included. Section 1.6, Decisions to be Made, has been clarified.

Chapter 2

More detail has been included about the alternatives, including structure types, access roads, clearing, stream crossings, and gates. The Agency Proposed Action includes two new options through the Pine Creek area.

Chapter 3

Some resource information has been added, updated, or corrected.

Chapter 4

Some impact information has been added, updated, or corrected.

Chapter 5

BPA has updated information for threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, program and plan consistency, recreation resources, air quality, and special use permits.

Chapter 6

This is a new chapter that contains the comments received on the Draft EIS and BPA's responses to the comments.

Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, and the Index

Corrections and additions have been made to these chapters.

Appendices

Additional appendices have been included in the Final EIS.

