



December 2011

Public Notice
Final Environmental Assessment
Grand Coulee 500-kV Transmission Line Replacement Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has finalized the environmental assessment (EA) for the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Grand Coulee 500-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Replacement Project in Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan counties, Washington. Based on the Final EA, both Reclamation and BPA have prepared Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI)s. Reclamation has made a decision on how to proceed with the project. BPA has assisted Reclamation with the design and environmental review, and will be constructing the project for Reclamation. This letter describes Reclamation's decision, construction schedule, and how to find more information about this project.

Background

BPA has been asked by Reclamation to design and construct six new 500-kV overhead transmission lines at Grand Coulee Dam. The new overhead lines would replace six existing underground lines. The existing underground lines consist of aging, oil-filled cables between Grand Coulee's Third Powerplant and the 500-kV spreading yard, both of which are operated and maintained by Reclamation. The new overhead lines would transfer power that is generated at the Third Powerplant, across the Columbia River and over the Visitor Center area, and then proceed uphill where they will connect to existing lines that transfer power from this area into the Regional power grid. The project would help ensure safe and reliable transmission of power from Grand Coulee Dam's Third Powerplant.

BPA, on behalf of Reclamation, prepared the EA to assist Reclamation in determining if the Proposed Action would cause significant impacts that would warrant preparing an environmental impact statement. In May 2011, BPA made the Preliminary EA available for public review and comment. Comments were received and only minor revisions were made to the EA. The EA Revision Sheet combined with the Preliminary EA constitutes the Final EA. Based on the analysis in the EA and the measures that will mitigate adverse effects, both Reclamation and BPA have found that the Proposed Action will not cause any significant impacts and both agencies have prepared FONSI)s. BPA also has prepared a Mitigation Action Plan that lists all of the mitigation measures that the agencies are committed to implementing for this Proposed Action.

Decision

Reclamation has decided to proceed with the Preferred Alternative (Overhead Alternative #2). BPA will replace the existing underground transmission lines with new overhead transmission lines, will construct new tower structures, will improve some access roads, and will add some new access roads within the Project Area.

Open-house meeting and construction schedule

Construction work is scheduled to begin in March 2012. Construction will continue through the fall/winter of 2012 for as long as weather permits. Both agencies will hold an informal open house meeting close to the time when construction begins. At the meeting, you can learn more about the project, the proposed construction schedule and discuss your questions with the construction contractors, Reclamation and BPA staff. You will be sent information about the meeting date, time and location a few weeks prior to the meeting.

For more information

The EA Revision Sheet, FONSI, and Mitigation Action Plan are enclosed if you previously requested a Preliminary EA. If you did not receive a copy of any of these documents and would like copies, please call our toll-free document request line (800) 622-4520. These documents are also available online at <http://www.bpa.gov/go/coulee>.

Contact information

If you have any questions about the project, you may contact either agency at:

Bureau of Reclamation

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