

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: January 31, 2011

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis (SA) for the McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project Final EIS
(DOE/EIS-0332/SA-03)

TO: Theresa Berry
Project Manager – TEP-TPP-3

Proposed Action: McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project - existing tower pad access road expansion near McNary Dam

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Location: Umatilla and Sherman counties, Oregon; Benton and Klickitat counties, Washington

Background: In 2002, BPA completed the McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0332) and issued a Record of Decision (ROD) documenting its decision to build and operate the McNary-John Day 500-kV transmission line. The EIS assessed the environmental impacts of constructing the components of the transmission line, including transmission towers and associated access roads. Construction of the transmission line began in 2009 and is currently underway.

A portion of the under-construction transmission line crosses the Columbia River, downstream of the McNary Dam, in Umatilla County, Oregon. There are three man-made rock transmission tower pads at this location to support several transmission line crossings of the Columbia River (see enclosed Aerial Photo). The existing tower pads to the east and the west were expanded in 2002 to allow for the installation of new larger towers for the McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project. To date, BPA has used an existing access road along the north side of the center tower pad to access the transmission tower sites in this area. However, as construction has progressed, BPA has discovered that this existing road needs to be expanded along its corners to allow for safe access and sufficient clearance for heavy equipment to the eastern-most pad (see enclosed Figures 1-3). More specifically, the expansion would allow access for a crane and other heavy equipment necessary to dismantle the existing tower and to construct and erect the new tower on the eastern most tower pad.

Analysis: The expansion of the existing access road would fill lower lying areas to the west and east to the current level of the existing road which is 275 feet above sea level (see enclosed Figures 1-3). Expanding the road would increase the existing road area by 0.094 acre and would use approximately 281 cubic yards of rock. A minimal amount of filling (0.094 acre) and a small amount of predominantly non-native vegetation removal would be required, which would not be considered a significant increase in the amount of disturbance from what was evaluated in the 2002 Final EIS. Based on cultural resource surveys expanding the tower pad road would not

be expected to affect any cultural resources in the area. Some areas to be filled fall below the Ordinary High Water Mark. The road expansion would be conducted under both US Army Corp of Engineers section 404 and Oregon Department of State Lands removal/fill permits. A small amount of unavoidable impact to wetlands would be compensated for under approved mitigation plans.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) the proposed expansion of the existing access road does not represent substantial changes to the McNary-John Day Transmission Line Project that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) the proposed expansion is not new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns regarding the project or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts
Biological Scientist

CONCUR: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

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Attachments:

Figures 1-3, Proposed Expansion of Existing Access Road
Aerial Photo of project site

cc:

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