



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

October 4, 2002

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: Those Interested in the Fiber-Optic Cable portion of BPA's Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project.

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is currently studying the environmental impacts of a new transmission line and substation called the Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project.

Plans to install fiber-optic cable between Vantage Substation, about 10 miles north of Mattawa, Washington, and the new Wautoma Substation (approximately 27 miles), southwest of the Hanford Monument are included in this study (See enclosed map). If the project is approved for construction, the fiber-optic cable would be strung on a combination of the new and existing transmission line structures. As part of the project, a combination of existing roads and new roads would be built. Fiber installation would use this same set of roads. From the new Wautoma Substation, fiber would also be installed on existing structures to loop back to the Midway Substation. Existing access roads would be used for this fiber installation and no road improvements are expected.

In order to operate the new Wautoma Substation, fiber-optic cable would also be installed from Vantage Substation north to BPA's Columbia Substation (approximately 32 miles). The fiber-optic cable would be strung on the existing Vantage-Columbia transmission line structures. No new right-of-way would be needed and existing roads would be used for fiber installation.

This letter describes the project and lists people you can call if you have any questions. Please pass this letter on to anyone occupying your property such as renters or lessees. You can also call BPA with their names and addresses so BPA can mail a copy of the letter and add these people to our mailing list.

Background: BPA provides electricity throughout the Pacific Northwest using a network of power lines, substations, and control centers. BPA operates this network using a communication system of microwave radios and fiber-optic cable. The communication system tells which transmission lines are in service, how much electricity they are carrying, detects equipment failures, and provides other operational uses. It also provides voice communications for repair and maintenance crews.

BPA continues to upgrade its communication system by installing fiber-optic cable during new transmission line construction. Fiber-optic cable would be installed as part of the Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project. The new fiber would enable remote operation of the new Wautoma Substation as well as reinforce BPA's communication network.

Project Description: A BPA transmission line maintenance crew or a contract construction crew would attach small brackets to transmission structures and string the fiber-optic cable. The fiber-optic cable, which ranges from 3/4 to 1-inch in diameter, would be attached to each transmission structure, under the conductors, along the project route. Every three to five miles there would be a splice box/reeling location for the stringing and tensioning of the fiber-optic cable (each reeling location is estimated to disturb approximately ¼ acres during construction). The cable ends are spliced together at these locations and then sealed within a splice box, which would be located on the transmission structure.

Other fiber-optic equipment needed as part of the communications network would be installed within existing substation yards or rights-of-way. For added safety, BPA and its contractor may install temporary structures at some places, such as road crossings, while the cable is being strung. BPA and its contractor would work with landowners to prevent or mitigate any crop damage that may result from project construction activities.

All project activities would occur either within existing rights-of-way, substation yards, or at designated staging areas. BPA would use standard utility equipment: four wheel drive pickup trucks, cable pulling and tensioning machines and rubber-tired all-terrain vehicles. A helicopter would be used to string the fiber-optic cable between towers. Depending on weather conditions and terrain, approximately ten miles of fiber optic cable can be installed in one week.

Installation of the fiber-optic cable would begin in early 2003. Since work must be done in a way that would not interfere with BPA's construction of the new transmission line and operation of the existing transmission lines, installation of the fiber will be done in segments. The fiber needs to be operational by summer 2004.

Before work begins, representatives from BPA or its contractor may contact you to coordinate specific work activities as necessary. Property owners who have been permitted rights to grow trees within the right-of-way need to make sure these trees do not exceed the height limits specified in the agreements. **Please contact the Realty Specialist listed below if you have buried utilities or placed improvements on the right-of-way without obtaining a permit from BPA. We need this information so that we can coordinate with our construction crews and try to avoid possible damage.**

Environmental Analysis: An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared for the Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project, including the fiber-optic cable. A Draft EIS was issued in February 2002 and a Final EIS is scheduled to be released to the public in December 2002. If you would like to receive a copy of the Final EIS or FEIS Summary, please check the appropriate box on the enclosed postcard and return to BPA by October 21, 2002.

pFor More Information: If you have questions about land issues or you would like to meet with a BPA representative to discuss the project further, please call Mari Rosales, Realty Specialist, in Spokane, at (509) 321-2226. If you have questions regarding engineering or other project issues, you may call Ivy Tyson, Project Engineer, in Vancouver, Washington, toll-free at 1-888-276-7790. Mari can also be reached at the toll-free number.

Sincerely,

/s/ Nancy Wittpenn for 9-30-2002

Lou Driessen
Project Manager

Enclosures