

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 12, 2005

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-263-McNary-Ross/McNary-Horse Heaven Transmission Lines)
Project #: V-P-05/06

to: Bill Erickson
Natural Resource Specialist – TFP/Walla Walla

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the McNary-Ross (345 kV) and McNary-Horse Heaven (230 kV) Transmission Line Corridor from Structure 15/2 + 489 to Structure 16/2 + 806.

Location: The project area is located near the town of Patterson in Benton County, Washington, being in the Walla Walla Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted danger, windbreak and volunteer trees in the rights-of-way and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission lines. Since these trees are approaching the electrical clearance zones of the lines, BPA is clearing these trees to prevent them from falling or growing into the lines causing system outages. Also, access road clearing will be conducted. BPA plans to conduct vegetation control with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon be a hazard to the transmission line. All tall growing tree species over 1 foot tall will be cut.

The width of the managed ROW easement is 250 feet. All work will be accomplished by selective and non-selective vegetation control methods to assure that there is little potential harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. The work will provide system reliability.

Analysis: A Vegetation Management Checklist was completed for the project corridor in accordance with the requirements identified in the Bonneville Power Administration's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285).

The subject corridor traverses rural private lands, urban rural lands, the town of Patterson, Washington and irrigated orchards.

Sections 3 of the checklists identify the natural resources present in the areas of the proposed work. The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project areas along with applicable mitigation measures.

Water Resources: No water bodies have been identified along the project work corridor. However, if any are found to be present during the work, no ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near any streams. All available herbicidal, manual and mechanical methods will be used. If necessary, the following herbicide buffers will be implemented for the project. Outside a 100 foot buffer from any T&E listed stream, ponds or wetlands or a 35 foot buffer from any other stream, pond or wetland, Triclopyr BEE (common formulations, Garlon 4 and Tahoe 4E) may be applied. Formulations of Triclopyr TEA (common formulations Garlon 3A and Tahoe 3A) may be applied for spot or localized applications up to one yard of the waters edge for T&E listed streams, ponds or wetlands or up to the waters edge of any other water body or sensitive habitat. For any initial or follow up broadcast treatment with Triclopyr TEA on sprouting brush, a 35 foot buffer will be maintained from any stream, pond, wetland of sensitive areas. Other approved herbicides and buffers as reference in the project vegetation management checklist may also be used.

No drinking water wells, irrigation wells or water supplies were identified along the right-of-way.

Threatened and Endangered Species/Essential Fish Habitat: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act, BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project will have any effects on any listed species. A Species list was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) web link on September 8, 2005 identifying threatened and endangered species potentially occurring in the Benton County project area. A determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA listed species and designated critical habitat for the project and for Essential Fish Habitat.

Cultural Resources: Danger tree removal will not affect cultural and historic resources. No soil disturbance will occur along the project corridor during this work. If any cultural resources are found during the work, work will cease until a BPA archeologist has been notified and direction given.

Re-Vegetation: No re-vegetation is planned during the work.

Monitoring: The entire project will be inspected during the work period. Additionally the line will be routinely patrolled after treatment to monitor the effectiveness of the treatment and any issues associated with the project.

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. This Supplement Analysis also finds the proposed actions will not affect threatened or endangered species. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Joseph Sharpe for
Ken Hutchinson
Environmental Scientist

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

DATE: 9/13/2005

Attachments:
Vegetation Management Checklist
Species List
Effects Determination

cc:
K. Pierce – KEC-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
K. Hutchinson – KEPR/Walla Walla
H. Adams – LC-7
J. Hilliard Creecy – T-DITT2
M. Richardson – TFP/Walla walla
G. Wilfong – TFPF/Pasco
Environmental File – KEC-4
Official File – KEP (EQ-14)