

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: September 14, 2005

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS  
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-264-Macks Inn - Madison transmission line Project #: **V-I-05/01**)

TO: Joe Johnson  
Natural Resource Specialist - TFS-KALISPELL

**Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to conduct vegetation control activities that include hand cutting and mechanical chipping along the entire Right-of-Way and access roads. No herbicides will be used.

**Location:** The transmission line is located in Gallatin and Fremont County, Montana and Idaho respectively. The line is within the boundary of Gallatin (8 miles) and the Targhee (9 miles) National Forests; BPA's Idaho Falls Region.

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

**Description of the Proposal:** From Macks Inn Substation to structure 5/7 (4.5 miles) vegetation management will be limited to cutting trees taller than 4-5 feet within the Right of Way; however, within a radius of 30 feet around the transmission towers all tall growing trees will be cut. From structure 5/7 to Madison substation vegetation management will be limited to cutting trees 10 feet and taller, except within a 30 foot radius around the transmission towers, all trees will be cut. All vegetation that is cut will be chipped and spread along the right of way. Tree height cutting limitations do not include danger trees along the edge of the Right of Way whose presence pose immediate risk to the power line.

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

BPA consulted with the Targhee and Gallatin National Forests and it was agreed that the proposed vegetation management is consistent with the vegetation management agreement.

Section 3 of the checklist identifies the natural resources present in the area of the proposed work. The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures.

**Water Resources:** Waterbodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are listed in section 3.1 of the Vegetation Management Checklist. Trees in riparian zones will be selectively cut. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented thus eliminating the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams.

No drinking water, irrigation wells, or water supplies were identified along the rights of way for this project.

Threatened and Endangered Species: 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. Two species lists were obtained for federally listed, proposed and candidate species potentially occurring within the project boundaries. The project is located within Montana and Idaho. From the Eastern Idaho Field office, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) county species list (SP#-1-4-05-SP-0356) was received on August 18, 2005. Western Montana's county species lists are available from their website. The species list was created 6/14/05 and BPA downloaded the list August 18, 2005. In addition a review of species under the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries was conducted. A determination of No Effect was made for all ESA listed species.

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of NOAA database did not identify Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) streams occurring in the project area.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are known for the project area. If a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work will be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist, and the BPA archeologist will be contacted.

Re-Vegetation: Native grasses are present on the entire right-of-way and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that will have lightly disturbed soil predominately located on the right-of-way roads.

Monitoring: The entire project will be inspected during the work period. Additionally, monitoring for the follow-up treatment will be conducted in 2010.

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/ John Howington

John Howington  
Physical Scientist

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

DATE: 9/19/2005

Attachment:  
Vegetation Management Checklist  
USFWS Species Lists  
Effects Determination