

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: March 5, 2008

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-362 - Grand Coulee – Bell Transmission Line Corridor.) **Project No. 795**

TO: Tom Murphy
Natural Resource Specialist – TFS/BELL-1

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the Grand Coulee – Bell Transmission Line Corridor which includes the following transmission line right-of-ways: Grand Coulee – Bell #5, Grand Coulee – Bell #3, Grand Coulee-Westside #1, Westside – Bell #1, Grand Coulee – Bell #6, Grand Coulee – Creston #1 and the Creston – Bell #1.

Location: The project is located in Grant, Lincoln and Spokane County, Washington in the Spokane Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to remove tall-growing and noxious vegetation from the right-of-way (ROW) and access roads that can potentially interfere with the operation, maintenance, and reliability of the transmission lines. Tall-growing and noxious vegetation, danger trees and reclaim trees will be removed and/or controlled inside the ROW using selective and nonselective methods that may include hand cutting, mowing, and herbicidal treatment. Low-growing vegetation will be protected along the right-of-way with the exception of at structure sites and access roads.

Selective vegetation management will occur along the entire length of the transmission line right-of-ways. This proposal covers the right-of-way width of 400 feet totaling approximately 42 acres of treated area.

The proposed action will allow safe and timely access to the subject transmission line structure which will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA safety standards.

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

The project area is in private woodlot ownership with occasional cattle grazing. The ROW crosses several streams which should be considered fish bearing. No other agencies or Tribal involvement exists.

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: Water bodies (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 to include only those that are within 50 feet of the conductor at maximum sag. Trees will be topped where shrubs are not present to provide shade and a silt buffer. No ground-disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented, thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near water bodies.

Only BPA-approved herbicides will be applied to the cut surfaces of sprouting (deciduous) species if they encountered. Although not planned, any herbicides being applied near water resources will use the specified buffer width from the edge of the water resource.

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

Threatened and Endangered Species and Habitats: 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 reviewed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on February 6, 2008, identifying threatened and endangered species and Critical Habitat Units potentially occurring in the project area. In addition, a review of species under the jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries was conducted.

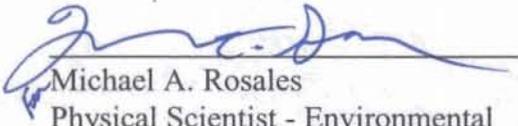
There are no ESA-listed fish species or Essential Fish Habitat present in or near the project area. A determination of “No Effect” was made for all ESA-listed species, designated critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat for the project.

Cultural Resources: Vegetation management activities are not anticipated to affect cultural resources, as there will not be any ground-disturbing activities. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and the appropriate tribe, the BPA Environmental Representative and the BPA archaeologist will be notified.

Monitoring: The right-of-way identified in the checklist will be inspected during and after completion of the work to determine if all target vegetation has been removed from these areas. Re-seeding using a native seed mix will occur as necessary to stabilize traveled surfaces. Follow-up monitoring for vegetation control will combine work in progress inspections and next-season site reviews to determine the effectiveness of control methods.

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.

Sincerely,


Michael A. Rosales
Physical Scientist - Environmental

CONCUR


Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 3-10-08

Attachment:

Vegetation Management Checklist and Cut Sheets
Effects Determination for T&E Species