

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 15, 2008

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-373 Cheney Tap to Silver Lake-Sunset Transmission Line Corridor)
Project No.865

TO: Tom Murphy – TFS-Bell-1
Natural Resource Specialist

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the Cheney Tap to Silver Lake-Sunset, 115 kV Transmission Line Corridor Right of Way (ROW) from structure 1/1 to 10/5.

Location: The project is located in 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 and access roads that can potentially interfere with the operation, maintenance, and reliability of the transmission lines. All vegetation management activities will be performed in accordance with the BPA Master Agreement Statement of Work for Vegetation Control on Bonneville Power Administration Transmission Line Rights-of-Way (MA) and in accordance with the specific details identified on the vegetation management checklist and detail sheet.

Tall growing and noxious vegetation and reclaim trees will be removed and/or controlled inside the right of way using selective and nonselective methods that may include hand cutting, mowing and herbicidal treatment. Danger trees adjacent to the right of way will also be removed and/or controlled. Low growing vegetation will be protected along the right-of-way with the exception of brush at the base of transmission structures, tower sites and within access roads. This proposal covers a variable right-of-way width of up to 100 feet totaling approximately 46.5 acres of vegetation control.

Initial treatment will begin July 2008 and is to be completed by September 2008. This corridor is maintained on a 10 year cycle.

The proposed action will allow safe and timely access to the subject transmission line which will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work performed 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 BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285).

Land along the project ROW consists of private woodlot ownership which is managed for timber and small woodlot production with occasional cattle grazing. The ROW crosses or is located within ½ mile of water resources some of which may be fish bearing streams. 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 using the specified buffer width from the edge of any water resource will be used for stump treatment. 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 May 7, 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 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.


Michael A. Rosales
Physical Scientist - Environmental

CONCUR: Katherine S. Pierce DATE: May 15, 2008
Katherine Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

References:
Vegetation Management Checklist
Effects Determination