

United States Government

Department of Energy

memorandum

Bonneville Power Administration

DATE: July 30, 2008

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-384-Libby-Troy section of the Libby-Bonnors Ferry #1 Transmission Line Corridor) **PP&A No. 907**

to: Joe Johnson
Natural Resource Specialist--TFBV/Kalispell

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management on U.S. Forest Service and Montana State lands along the Libby-Troy section of the Libby-Bonnors Ferry #1, 115 kV Transmission Line Corridor Right of Way.

Location: The project is located in Lincoln County, Montana.

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 line. All vegetation management activities will be performed in accordance with the BPA Master Agreement (MA) Statement of Work for Vegetation Control on BPA Transmission Line Rights-of-Way (ROW) and in accordance with the specific details identified on the prescription sheet.

In a cooperative effort with the Lincoln County Weed Control Board, a combination of biological controls and herbicidal treatment will be used to eradicate knapweed and other noxious vegetation from the Libby-Troy section of the transmission line right of way and access roads. The proposed action as requested by the U.S. Forest Service (Kootenai National Forest) to eradicate and control noxious weeds

Biological controls, using the knapweed root weevil (*Cyphocleonus achates*) and the knapweed seed head weevil (*Larinus minutus*) will be applied to control knapweed. Both insects are considered host specific since they only target the root system or the seed head of the knapweed plant and will not switch to crops or other plant species once the target vegetation (i.e. knapweed) becomes scarce. Insect biological controls will be applied on steep, rocky hillsides and where large areas of knapweed are present.

BPA-approved herbicides, using spot and localized herbicide application methods, will be applied to noxious vegetation at the following sections of transmission line ROW:

- structure 15/15 to structure 17/5
- structure 18/11 to structure 19/5
- structure 21/4 to structure 24/9

Initial treatment will begin July 2008 and is to be completed by September 2008. This corridor is maintained on a 7 to 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 Control Prescription and 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).

Land along the project corridor consists of USFS (Kootenai NF), and State managed lands. Primary uses for lands within the project area include timber production, and wildlife management area. The ROW also crosses several streams which should be considered fish bearing. No other agency or Tribal involvement exists.

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 the prescription/checklist. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods will be implemented thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near any streams. Only BPA-approved herbicides will be used. 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 right of way.

T&E 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 July 2008, identifying threatened and endangered species and Critical Habitat Units potentially occurring in the project area. By implementing the conservation and avoidance measures mentioned in the Effects Determination for this project, a determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA listed species and designated critical habitat that occur in the project area.

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of NOAA Fisheries Service and BPA's integrated GIS system database identified no Essential Fish Habitat streams occurring in the project area. A determination was made that this project will have "No Effect" on essential fish habitat.

Cultural Resources: Vegetation management activities are not anticipated to affect cultural resources. 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 archeologist will be notified.

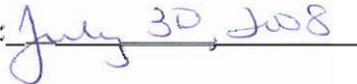
Monitoring: The ROW will be inspected periodically during vegetation control activities to determine if all target vegetation has been removed and to assess contract compliance by the contractor. Re-seeding using a native seed mix will occur as necessary to stabilize traveled

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 - Environment

CONCUR: 
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 

References:
Vegetation Control Prescription and Checklist
Effects Determination

cc:
K. Pierce – KEC-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
P. Smith – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
H. Adams – LC-7
M. McCracken – TFSU-Kalispell
K. Marsh – TFSU-Kalispell
M. Rosales – KEPR-Bell-1
Official File – KEP (EQ-14)

Mrosales: mr: 7471:7/7/2008 (KEP-KEPR/BELL-1-W:\NEP\2008 FILES\EQ-14-Supplemental Analysis\FEIS-0285-SA-384-LIBY-TROY.doc)