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**United States Government** **Department of Energy**

# memorandum

**Bonneville Power Administration**

DATE: FEB 0 9 2010

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis (SA) for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-421) - Murray-Custer #1 **Project #: 1530**

TO: Jacob Grinolds – TFBV-SNOHOMISH
Natural Resource Specialist

**Proposed Action:** Vegetation management for a portion of the Murray-Custer No.1, 230-kV transmission line corridor between Murray Substation and structure 6/3

**Location:** The project line is located in Snohomish County, Washington, and is located in the Snohomish District. The previous SA prepared for this corridor is DOE/EIS-0285/SA-121, February 2003.

**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. Unwanted tall growing and noxious vegetation, danger trees and reclaimed trees would be removed and/or controlled inside the ROW using manual, mechanical and herbicide treatments. This proposal covers the ROW width of approximately 130 feet along six miles of transmission line. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. The work would provide system reliability.

The overall long-term goal is to develop low-growing plant communities within the ROW. Limited noxious weed control would also be conducted along the ROW. The proposed project would begin in March of 2010 and be completed by September of 2010.

**Analysis:** This project meets the standards and guidelines for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000) and Record of Decision (ROD).

A Vegetation Management Checklist was completed for this project in accordance with the requirements identified in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS and ROD. The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures outlined in the Vegetation Control Prescription & Checklist.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are listed in the Vegetation Control Prescription & Checklist. As conservation and avoidance measures, only spot treatment with Garlon 3A (Triclopyr TEA) would be used within a 100 foot buffer up to the water's edge of any stream containing threatened or endangered species. Danger trees in riparian zones would be selectively cut to include only those that are within 50 feet of the conductor at maximum sag. Trees would be topped where shrubs are not present to provide shade and a silt buffer. Shrubs would not be cut that are less than 10 feet high where ground to conductor clearance is more than 50 feet. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods would be implemented, thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams. No in-stream work would be conducted with the proposed project.

Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species and Habitats: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act, BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project would have any effects on any listed species. A species list was reviewed from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on January 27, 2010 to identify Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species and Critical Habitat Units that might exist in the project area. This review also covered species under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries.

*T & E Species*: Steelhead, Bull trout, Chinook salmon, and Coho salmon are listed species that have been identified as having standing populations in waterways that fall within the ROW. Measures identified for water resources would be followed to avoid impacting listed aquatic species. Additonally, presence of Bald eagles have been recorded in areas within ½ mile of the ROW. All project work will be conducted within the existing ROW and BPA will follow timing restriction recommendations, which state that no management activities will occur within ¼ mile of either; an occupied Bald eagle nest between January 1 and August 15, or wintering concentrations or roost sites between November 1 and March 31.

No other listed species were found to occur within ½ mile of the ROW. A determination of "No Effect" was made for listed T&E species that potentially occur in the project area.

*Critical Habitat*: Critical habitat for Bull trout and Chinook salmon are present within the proposed ROW vegetation maintenance project. Measures identified for water resources would be followed to avoid impacting these critical habitats. No other critical habitat is found within ½ mile of the proposed ROW vegetation maintenance project. A determination of "No Effect" was made for critical habitat within in the project area.

*Essential Fish Habitat*: A review of the NOAA database identified Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) occurring in the project area for Chinook, Pink, and Coho salmon. Measures identified for water resources would be followed to avoid impacting EFH. A determination of "No Effect" was made for EFH waters that occur in the project area.

Cultural Resources: No ground disturbing activities are planned for this project that could affect cultural resources. However, 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.

**Monitoring:** The ROW identified in the checklist would be inspected after completion of the work to determine if all hazard trees have been removed from these areas. Re-seeding using a native seed mix would occur as necessary to stabilize travel surfaces. Follow-up monitoring for vegetation control would occur 6-12 months after the initial treatment.

**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.

Chad Browning
Biological Scientist (Environmental)

CONCUR: Katherine S Pierce DATE: February 9, 2010
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:
Vegetation Management Checklist
Effects Determination