

memorandum

DATE: March 14, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-Alvey

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-464-Chemawa-Salem No. 1 Transmission Line Corridor)
Project No. PP&A # 2141

to: Clayton Tinsley
Project Manager – TFBV/Chemawa

Proposed Action: Vegetation management along the Chemawa-Salem #1 and #2 115-kV transmission line shared corridor rights-of-way (ROW) and associated access roads from Chemawa Substation to Salem Substation.

Location: The project is located in Polk and Marion counties, Oregon, in the Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) Salem District.

Proposed by: BPA

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to remove tall-growing and noxious vegetation from the transmission line corridors and access roads on the following segments:

- 115-kV Chemawa-Salem #1 and #2 (Chemawa to Salem)
- 115-kV Chemawa-Salem Alumina #1 (Chemawa to S. Alumina)
- Salem-Albany #2 (Salem to 1/5)
- Salem-Grand Ronde #1 (Salem to 1/5)

The shared corridor includes segments of a total of five different transmission lines, ranges from 100 to 150 feet in width, and traverses approximately 14 miles of terrain.

In order to comply with Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) standards, BPA proposes to manage vegetation with the goal of removing tall-growing vegetation that is currently or will soon become a hazard to the transmission line (a hazard is defined as one or more branches, tops, and/or whole trees that could fall or grow into the minimum safety zone of the transmission line(s) causing an electrical arc, relay, and/or outage). The work supports system reliability. The overall goal of BPA is to establish low-growing plant communities along the ROW to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation. The proposed project would begin in March 2012 and be completed by September 2012. A follow-up treatment may occur 6-12 months after the initial treatment. The management scheme is repeated on a 4-year cycle.

A combination of selective and nonselective vegetation control methods would be used to perform the work. All methods including selective cutting, mowing, and herbicide treatments are consistent with the methods approved in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000) and Record of Decision (ROD). Debris

would be disposed of using onsite chip, lop and scatter, or mowing techniques. All onsite debris would be scattered along the ROW.

Analysis: A Vegetation Management Prescription and Checklist was developed for this project that incorporates the requirements identified in the Vegetation Management EIS. Previously completed SAs were also considered and include: *DOE/EIS-0285/SA-137-April 1, 2003*.

Land along the corridor consists of urban residential and agricultural lands, as well as the McNary golf course and the cities of Keizer and Salem. No tribal lands are involved.

The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures:

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands) occurring in the project area are noted in the Vegetation Management Prescription. Trees and brush in riparian zones will be selectively cut to include only those that are within 50 feet of the transmission conductor at maximum sag. Trees will be topped where shrubs are not present to provide shade and a silt buffer. Cut stump herbicide application is prescribed for the initial treatment of the project. Follow-up spot and localized foliar treatments will occur on resprouting tall-growing and invasive species 6-12 months following initial treatments. As a conservation measure, only formulations of Triclopyr TEA may be applied within a 100-foot buffer from all waterways containing any threatened and endangered species. Irrigation and drinking water wells, listed in the prescription, or other domestic water supplies located on the ROW will have a 165-foot radius buffer excluding all herbicide use.

No ground-disturbing management methods will be implemented, thus minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near water bodies.

Threatened and Endangered Species/Essential Fish Habitat: 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) identifying federally listed, proposed, and candidate species and Critical Habitat Units potentially occurring in the project area. Based on the ESA review conducted, BPA made a determination that the project would have “No Effect” for all ESA listed species under USFWS jurisdiction. BPA also conducted a review of species under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries. A determination of “No Effect” was made for all ESA listed species under NOAA jurisdiction, with the implementation of the conservation measures in the Water Resources section above.

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of the NOAA Fisheries database identified Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) waterways occurring in the project area. Measures identified for Water Resources would be followed for EFH. A determination of “No Effect” was made for EFH waters that occur in the project area.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are known to exist within the project area. Vegetation management activities will have limited ground disturbance and are not anticipated to affect cultural resources that may be present. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the

appropriate tribe(s), BPA Environmental Representative, and a BPA archaeologist will be notified.

Monitoring: The entire project would be inspected daily during the work period of February 2012 to September 2012 to ensure all target vegetation has been managed. Follow-up monitoring for vegetation control would combine line maintenance patrols and next season's site reviews to determine any follow-up actions that would be required. Additionally, the line would be patrolled annually by ground after the initial treatment to monitor the long-term effectiveness of the treatments. A diary of inspection results would be used to document formal inspections and will be filed with the contracting officer.

Re-Vegetation: Native grasses and low-growing shrubs are present on the ROW and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that would have lightly disturbed soil.

Findings: This Supplement Analysis finds that (1) the proposed actions are substantially consistent with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS 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/ Stuart Hugill, for:
Benjamin Tilley
Natural Resource Specialist – KEP-Alvey

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

DATE: March 14, 2012

Attachment(s)
Vegetation Management Checklist
Effects Determination for T&E Species