

memorandum

DATE: March 27, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEPR-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-465 Wine Country, PP&A-2207)

TO: Tom Murphy
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV-BELL-1

Proposed Action: Vegetation management in Wine Country No. 1

Location: Several project locations: Wine Country-Midway No. 1, Wine Country Substation to 2/1; Spring Creek-Wine Country, entire line corridor; Wautoma-Rock Creek, 12/1 - 63/3; and Big Eddy-Spring Creek, 37/1-Spring Creek Substation. The rights-of-way (ROW) traverse Yakima County, Washington within the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Wenatchee District.

Proposed by: BPA

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to remove tall growing and noxious vegetation from the ROW, structure sites 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 Statement of Work for Vegetation Control on BPA Transmission Line ROW and in accordance with the specific details identified in the vegetation management checklist and detail/prescription sheet.

Tall growing and noxious vegetation 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. Danger trees adjacent to the ROW will also be removed and/or controlled. Low growing vegetation will be protected along the ROW, with the exception of brush at the base of transmission structures, tower sites, and within access roads.

Debris disposal will be a combination of lop and scatter, mulching, and mechanical chipping. Treatment will begin in 2011 and the transmission line ROW, structure sites and access roads will be maintained on a 7-to-10 year cycle.

The proposed action will allow safe and timely access to the 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 (VCP) was completed for this project in accordance with the requirements identified in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final EIS (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Land along the project corridor consists of rural residential and private agriculture. Primary uses for lands within the project area include agriculture. The ROW also crosses several streams which should be considered fish bearing.

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

Critical Habitat/Essential Fish Habitat: Critical habitat for Middle Columbia River Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) is located within 0.25 miles (1320 feet) of the transmission line ROW (project area). Site-specific requirements, including buffers, for working in and around these critical habitat resources can be found in the VCP for this project and the Effects Determination. By implementing the conservation and avoidance measures mentioned in the Effects Determination and VCP for this project, a determination of “No Effect” was made for all areas designated critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat that occur in the project area.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species: Several instances of a threatened species were found in this area:

- Middle Columbia River steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Resource specific requirements, including timing restrictions, are detailed in the VCP for this project. By implementing the conservation and avoidance measures mentioned in the Effects Determination and VCP for this project, a determination of “No Effect” was made for all T&E species that occur in the project area.

Wetlands and Riparian Habitat: Riparian habitat includes wetlands, rivers, streams, and any other water body meeting the definition of riparian habitat. Many areas were identified in this project area. A list of streams that cross the ROW are:

- Yakima River
- Satus Creek
- Rock Creek
- Pine Creek
- Spring Creek
- Additional unnamed creeks

Site-specific requirements including buffers if required, are detailed in the VCP for this project. Trees and brush in riparian zones will be selectively cut to include only those that are in violation of current BPA ground to conductor clearance electrical safety standards. 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.

Watershed Resources: Watershed resources include public/domestic drinking water supplies, irrigation sources and any other resources defined within the watershed. There are no known instances of watershed resources located within this project area, other than the streams listed

above. Following resource guidelines for these water bodies, as outlined in the VCP and Effects Determination for this project, will ensure watershed resources are protected.

Cultural Resources: This project does not include any ground disturbance, thus cultural resources is not an issue. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and the tribes, the BPA Environmental Representative and the BPA archeologist will be notified. This project is located just outside the boundary of the Yakama Nation reservation.

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/ Lisa MacLellan

Lisa MacLellan

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

CONCUR: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: March 27, 2012

Attachments:

Effects Determination