DOE F 1325.8e Electronic Form Approved by Forms Mgmt. 04/19/2006
(08-89)

United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: April 11, 2013

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-509)

TO: Jacob Marti
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV-THE DALLES

Proposed Action: Vegetation management on the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Rock Creek-John Day No. 1 Transmission Line and associated line corridors

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project No.: 2598

Location: Klickitat County, Washington; BPA's The Dalles District

Proposed by: BPA

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to remove unwanted vegetation along and adjacent to the transmission line corridor and access roads of the 115-kilovolt Rock Creek-John Day No. 1 transmission line corridor. There are multiple transmission lines in the corridor including; McNary-John Day No. 2 (structure 68/6 to 76/3), Wautoma-Rock Creek No. 1 (structure 63/4 to RKCR), Rock Creek-John Day No. 1 (RKCR to structure 13/1), Harvalum-Big Eddy No. 1 Tap (HRVL to 2/3), Horse Heaven-Harvalum No. 1 (51/4 to HRVL), and McNary-Ross No. 1 (68/6 to 75/3). The majority of the project involves a shared right-of-way (ROW) corridor including all of these line segments or two ROW corridors and corridor width varies from approximately 300 to 750 feet wide. The total ROW traverses over approximately 15 miles of hillside and plateaus along the Columbia River through private grazing, agricultural, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lands, and privately-owned smelter property.

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 overall goal of BPA is to establish low-growing plant communities along the ROW to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation.

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 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Debris would be disposed of using on-site chip, lop and scatter, or mulching techniques. All on-site debris would be scattered along the ROW or hauled off site, if necessary.

Analysis: A Vegetation Control Prescription & Checklist was developed for this corridor that incorporates the requirements identified in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000) and Record of Decision (August 23, 2000). The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures outlined in the Vegetation Control Prescription.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are identified in the Vegetation Control Prescription. As conservation and avoidance measures, only spot and localized 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. Trees in riparian zones would be selectively cut to include only those that will grow into the minimum approach distances of the conductor at maximum sag, other trees would be left in place or topped to preserved shade. Stumps will then be spot treated, and work will be performed during the summer months to minimize impact to wet areas. Shrubs that are less than 10-feet-high would not be cut where ground to conductor clearance allows. No ground disturbing vegetation management methods would be implemented thus eliminating the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams. For location information, see the Vegetation Control Prescription.

Threatened and Endangered Species: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project would have any effects on any listed species. A species list was obtained for federally listed, proposed and candidate species potentially occurring within the project boundaries from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 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, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). A determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA listed species under NOAA Fisheries' jurisdiction, with the implementation of the conservation measures in Water Resources section above.

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of the NOAA Fisheries database identified Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) streams 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 result in little or no ground disturbance and are not anticipated to affect cultural resources that may be present. If a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work will be stopped in the vicinity and the appropriate tribes, BPA environmental staff, and a BPA archeologist will be notified.

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

Monitoring: The entire project would be inspected during the work period, spring 2013 to fall 2013. A follow-up treatment would occur 6-12 months after the initial treatment. Additional monitoring for follow-up treatment would be conducted as necessary. A diary of inspection

results would be used to document formal inspections and will be filed with the contracting officer.

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. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Makary A. Hutson
Makary A. Hutson
Biological Scientist

CONCUR: */s/ Katherine S. Pierce* DATE: *April 11, 2013*
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

References:
Vegetation Management Prescription
Effects Determination