DOE F 1325.8 e Electronic Form Approved by CGIR - 01/20/95
(8-89)

United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: January 5, 2011

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEPR-COVINGTON

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis (SA) for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-440)- Covington-Maple Valley #2 **Project #: 1860**

TO: Jason Hunt – TFBV-COVINGTON
Natural Resource Specialist

Proposed Action: Vegetation management for approximately nine miles of the Covington-Maple Valley No.2, 230-kV transmission line corridor.

Location: The project line is located in King County, Washington, and is located in the Covington District.

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 150 feet along nine 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 January of 2011 and be completed by March of 2011.

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, 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 less than 10 feet high would not be cut 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. For sensitive waters containing listed species or considered Critical Habitat (CH) (specifically annotated on the Covington-Maple Valley #2 Vegetation Management Checklist attached), only spot treatment with Triclopyr Triethylamine salt (*TEA*) (Garlon 3A/Tahoe 3A) would be used within a 100 foot buffer up to the water's edge. No in-stream work would be conducted with the proposed project. *A determination of "No Effect" was made for water resources within the proposed project area.*

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 December 28, 2010 to identify Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species and CH 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: Bull and steelhead trout, and Chinook and coho salmon are listed species that have been identified as having standing populations in waterways that fall within the ROW. Waterways containing these populations have been identified and protective measures presented in the "Water Resources" section would be followed to avoid impacting listed aquatic species. *A determination of "No Effect" was made for listed T&E species that could potentially occur in the project area.*

Other Protected Species: Two bald eagle nest sites have been previously recorded within a ½ mile southeast of structures 1/5 and 5/4. All project work will be conducted within the existing ROW corridor. BPA will follow restrictions presented in the Bald Eagle Act that state a buffer of 660 feet shall be used when conducting land clearing, construction, or landscaping activities near wintering concentrations or roost sites. Bald eagles may occur within the vicinity of the project area; however, there will not be any removal or alteration of nest sites**.** *The proposed work therefore is determined to have "No Effect" on bald eagles.*

Critical Habitat: CH for both bull trout and Chinook salmon is present within identified waterways that cross the proposed ROW vegetation maintenance project. Protective measures presented in the "Water Resources" section would be followed to avoid impacting these CH streams. *A determination of "No Effect" was made for CH within in the project area.*

Essential Fish Habitat: A review of the NOAA database revealed the area of the proposed project is designated as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Chinook 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 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. *A determination of "No Effect" was made for cultural resources in the project area.*

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.

/s/ Chad Browning
Chad Browning
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

CONCUR: */s/ Katherine S. Pierce* DATE: *January 5, 2011*
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments:
Effects Determination