

memorandum

DATE: August 30, 2017

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: EPR-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-665)

TO: Jason Hunt
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV-OLYMPIA

Proposed Action: Vegetation management along the Chehalis-Raymond #1 corridor, the Holcomb-Naselle #1 corridor, and the Raymond-Cosmopolis #1 corridor.

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project No.: 3707

Location: Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Pacific Counties, Washington: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Olympia District

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation along and adjacent to the transmission line corridors, and access roads along a portion of the 115 kV Chehalis-Raymond No. 1 transmission line corridor from Structure 4/1 to Raymond Substation, a portion of the 115 kV Holcomb-Naselle No. 1 transmission line corridor from Holcomb Substation to structure 21/8, and the 115 kV Raymond-Cosmopolis No. 1 transmission line corridor from Raymond Substation to Cosmopolis Substation. The right-of-way (ROW) corridor in the proposed project area measures 50-150 feet in width and crosses approximately 81 miles of terrain through rural residential, small-scale agricultural, private timber, and Washington Department of Natural Resources land.

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. Land use for the project area consists of private forest, agricultural, and rural residential.

A combination of selective and nonselective vegetation control methods that may include hand cutting and herbicidal treatment would be used to perform the work. Herbicides would be selectively applied using spot treatment (stump or stubble treatment, basal treatment, and/or spot foliar), or localized treatments (broadcast application and cut stubble treatments) with chemicals approved in BPA's Vegetation Management EIS, to ensure that the roots are killed preventing new sprouts and selectively eliminating vegetation that interferes with the operation and maintenance of transmission infrastructure. Approximately 872 acres of ROW, 676 structure

sites, and 29.8 miles of access roads would be initially treated between October 2017 and April 2018. A follow-up treatment of re-sprouting target vegetation would be conducted on approximately 840 acres of ROW between mid-June 2018 and October 2018. To prevent trees from coming into contact with the energized conductors, BPA proposes to remove approximately 30 trees that have been identified along the ROW fringe. Other tree clearing activities would include side-limbing approximately 935 trees. Debris would be disposed of using on-site chip, lop and scatter, or mulching techniques. All onsite debris would be scattered along the ROW.

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 & Checklist.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are noted 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. 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. Trees that have the characteristics of suitable marbled murrelet nesting trees would not be removed during the project. All cutting and mowing activities would occur outside the marbled murrelet core breeding season timing restrictions from April 1 to September 4. During the late breeding season, between September 5 and September 23, dawn/dusk restrictions would be implemented

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. Based on project conservation measures, it was determined that the project would not adversely affect EFH.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are known for the project area. If a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist, and the BPA archeologist would be contacted.

Re-Vegetation: Native grasses are present on the entire ROW and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that would have lightly disturbed soil predominately located on the ROW roads.

Monitoring: The entire project would be inspected during the work period, October 2017 to October 2018. A follow-up treatment would occur 3-4 months after the initial treatment. Additional monitoring for follow-up treatment would be conducted as necessary. A vendor scorecard 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/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon
Environmental Scientist

CONCUR: */s/ Stacy L. Mason*
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: *August 30, 2017*

References:

Vegetation Management Prescription and Checklist
Effects Determination