

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 5, 2003

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA 150 East Ellensburg Tap)

TO: Tom Murphy
Natural Resource Specialist - TFS/Bell-1

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management for the East Ellensburg Tap, 1/6 to 3/19 Transmission Line ROW. The line is a 115 kV Single Circuit Transmission Line with no easement width. The proposed work will be accomplished in the indicated sections of the transmission line corridor.

Location: The ROW is located in Kittitas County, WA being in the Spokane Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation in the rights-of-ways and around transmission line structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. BPA plans to conduct vegetation control with the goal of removing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon be a hazard to the transmission line. Unfortunately, BPA's overall goal to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation is not an appropriate strategy for this line segment since most of it is in residential areas. Instead, landowners will be offered appropriate replacement trees.

Analysis: This project meets the standards and guidelines for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

Planning Steps:

1. Identify facility and the vegetation management need.

The work involved will be to clear tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon pose a hazard to the lines and selectively eliminating tall growing vegetation *before* it reaches a height or density to begin competing with low-growing vegetation. All work will take place in existing rights-of-ways.

Also, all off right-of-way trees that are potentially unstable and will fall within a minimum distance or into the zone where the conductors swing will be removed. All work will be accomplished by selective vegetation control methods to assure that there is little potential

harm to non-target vegetation and to low-growing plants. Desirable low-growing plants will not be disturbed. The work will provide system reliability.

The vegetation control is designed to provide a 10-year maintenance free interval. The overall vegetation management scheme will be to initially clear and remove all tall growing brush utilizing machine and hand cutting methods as outlined in the attached checklist.

Future cycles - As tall growing species are controlled, a 10-year entry treatment will be needed. Also a review of Danger trees and other hazards will take place at that time.

2. *Identify surrounding land use and landowners/managers and any mitigation.*

The subject corridor traverses residential and city greenbelt areas. During routine patrols, tall, encroaching trees and vegetation issues are identified and marked. If a danger or reclaim tree is identified as a potential threat to the integrity of the transmission line, appropriate action to remove the tree is taken. Landowners were notified of the upcoming work by telephone. All issues seem to be resolved at this time.

3. *Identify natural resources and any mitigation.*

No natural resources were identified within the proposed project area.

4. *Determine vegetation control and debris disposal methods.*

A licensed contractor would undertake the proposed work. The unwanted vegetation would be removed by employing manual and mechanical selective cutting methods along selected spans of the right-of-way.

Debris will be disposed by:

Chip – Mechanical brush disposal unit cuts brush into chips 4 inches or less in diameter and spread over the ROW, piled on ROW or trucked off site. Trunks too large for the chipper are limbed and the limbs chipped. Trunks are placed in rows along the edge of the right-of-way or scattered, as the situation requires.

Mulch – Mulching is a debris treatment that falls between chipping and lop and scatter. The debris is cut into 1 to 2 foot lengths, scattered on the right-of-way and left to decompose. This method is used when terrain and conditions do not allow the use of mechanical chipping equipment.

Landfill – Debris will be disposed of at a landfill site.

5. *Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.*

Along spans 1/1 to 1/17, landowners will be offered replacement trees. Ornamental trees will be replanted due to the urban residential setting. Low growing tree species will be planted to replace removed trees and to promote goodwill with the landowner.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

Right-of-way will be reviewed 2-3 times a year to follow up with any additional high trees.

7. Prepare appropriate environmental documentation.

No other environmental documentation is needed.

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/ Michael A. Rosales

Michael A. Rosales

Environmental Scientist – KEPR/Bell-1

CONCUR: /s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 05/09/2003

Attachment

cc:

L. Croff – KEC-4

T. McKinney – KEC-4

C. Leiter – KEP-4

J. Meyer – KEP-4

M. Rosales – KEPR/Bell-1

P. Key – LC-7

D. Hollen – TF-DOB-1

J. Lahti – TFS/Bell-1

S. Vickers – TFS/Bell-1

M. Borrows – TFSK/Ellensburg

Environmental File – KEC-4

Official File – KEP-4 (EQ-14)

Vegetation Management Checklist

1. IDENTIFY FACILITY AND THE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEED

1.1 Describe Right-of-way.

Corridor Name	Corridor Length & kV	Easement width	Miles of Treatment
East Ellensburg Tap	3 mi 115Kv	None	3
1/6 – 1/8		None	Portions of spans
1/9 – 1/10			
1/14 – 1/15			
1/17 – 1/18			
1/22 – 1/23			
1/25 – 2/1			
2/6 – 2/7			
2/19 – 2/22			
3/13 – 3/14			
3/17 – 3/19			

Right Of Way:

Danger Tree clearing

Other - Individual Yard trees on and off of the right of way. The vegetation will be manually cut or trimmed with hand-held chain saws.

1.2 Describe the vegetation needing management.

Vegetation Types:

Douglas Fir

Pine

Alder

Maple

Oak

Willow

Birch

Cottonwood

Russian Olive

Ash

Residential/orchard tree-trimming

Other/Description - Ornamental trees

Density:

Other/Description – individual trees

1.3 List measures you will take to help promote low-growing plant communities. If promoting low-growing plants is not appropriate for this project, explain why. Sites are in residential areas. Low Growing Plant Communities (LGPC) is not an appropriate strategy.

1.4 Describe overall management scheme/schedule.

Initial entry – Identify trees that are approaching clearance zone. Notify landowner of pending trim or removal activity. Utilize replacement option with landowner if appropriate.

Subsequent entry's – This maintenance activity is ongoing. Attempt to achieve at least a 5-year maintenance interval at the completion of cutting/trimming.

Future cycles - This maintenance cycle will occur over the next 10 years or more, depending on the success of the removal/replacement program.

2. IDENTIFY SURROUNDING LAND USE AND LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS

2.1 List the types of landowners and land uses along your corridor.

- § Landowners/Managers/Uses:
- § Residential
- § Urban
- § State/City/County Lands City of Ellensburg

2.2 Describe method for notifying right-of-way landowners and requesting information (i.e., doorhanger, letter, phone call, e-mail, and/or meeting). Develop landowner mail list, if appropriate.

Trees are identified by approximate survey station. Notification is provided to the landowner either verbally and or writing. Multiple contacts are given before an adverse removal. Work will be performed only in the presence of the landowner when requested.

2.3 List the specific land owner/landuse measures — determined from the handbook or through your consultations with the entities — that will be applied.

BPA will offer to remove the tree at no expense to the landowner. Items such as cleanup, wood removal and stump removal is negotiable. BPA will perform debris clean up as needed.

Many of the landowners have a strong desire to minimize any cutting or trimming of trees. Each landowner will be advised of the desired BPA maintenance interval.

Residential/Commercial:

In the following places, trees will be replaced with a low-growing species, or treated with tree growth regulators.

Span		Landowner	Species	Replace/regulator?
To	From			
1/17	1/1	Landowners will be offered replacement trees	Low Growing	Replace

2.4 Review any existing landowner agreements (e.g. tree/brush Permits or Agreements). List in table above any provisions that need to be followed and where they are located.

No written agreements are in place.

2.5 List any known casual informal use of the right-of-way by non-owner publics. List any constraints or measure's to take due to the informal use.

Sites are backyards and residential area. Casual pedestrian use is expected.

2.6 List other potentially affected people, agencies, or tribes (that are not landowners/managers) that need to be notified or coordinated with. Describe method of notification and coordination.

2-3 sites are park-like settings or greenbelts. Coordination with the city or homeowner association will occur prior to the commencement of activity.

3. IDENTIFY NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1 List any water resources (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) that may be impacted by vegetation control activities. For each water body describe the control methods and requirements or mitigation measures that will be used.

None

3.2 If planning to use herbicides, list locations of any known irrigation source, wells, or springs (landowners maybe able to provide this info if requested).

No herbicides will be used, vegetation will be manually cut or trimmed with hand held chain saws.

3.3 List below the areas that have Threatened or Endangered Plant or Animal Species and the name of the species, and any special measures that need to be taken due to their presence. Attach any BAs, T&E maps, or letters from US Fish and Wildlife.

None

3.4 List any other measures to be taken for enhancing wildlife habitat or protecting species.

N/A

3.5 List any visually sensitive areas and the measures to be taken at these areas.

N/A

3.6 List areas with cultural resources and the measures to be taken in those areas.

N/A

3.7 List areas with steep slopes or potential erosion areas and the measure and methods to be applied in those areas.

N/A

3.8 List areas of spanned canyons and the type of cutting needed.

N/A

4. DETERMINE VEGETATION CONTROL METHODS

4.1 List Methods that will be used in areas not previously addressed in steps above.

Methods
Manual, Mechanical

Herbicides: N/A

5. DETERMINE DEBRIS DISPOSAL AND REVEGETATION

5.1 Describe the debris disposal methods to be used and any special considerations.

Site-specific prescription will include options on debris disposal.

Debris Disposal:

Chip

Mulch

Other – haul debris to dump site.

5.2 List areas of reseeded or replanted (those areas not already described in steps 1, 2, or 3).

Reason for Reseed/plant	Type of Seed or Plants	Native?
To promote goodwill with landowner (planting trees)	Low growing	N/A

5.3 If not using native seed/plants, describe why.

Ornamental trees are required due to urban setting

5.4 Describe timing and any follow-up that will need to take place to ensure germination/success of seeding/planting.

Landowner will be responsible for maintaining success of replacement trees.

6.0 DETERMINE MONITORING NEEDS

6.1 Describe the follow-up/monitoring cycle that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the vegetation control methods used.

Right of way is reviewed 2-3 times per year to follow up with any additional high trees

6.2 Describe any follow-up or monitoring needed to determine if mitigation measures were effective.

Right of way is reviewed 2-3 times per year to follow up with any additional high trees

7. PREPARE APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

7.1 Describe any potential project impacts or project work that are different than those disclosed in the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS. Describe how those differences impact natural resources and if the differences are “substantial”.

None

7.2 Is there a need for additional NEPA documentation (i.e. Forest Service requirement, Record of Decision, supplemental EIS)? If so, attach.

No