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United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: June 2, 2003

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-152-Lancaster-Noxon

TO: Tom Murphy, Natural Resource Specialist

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management for the Lancaster-Noxon, 21/2 to 47/1 Transmission Line ROW. The line is a 230 kV Double Circuit Transmission Line with 162.5 foot easement width. The proposed work will be accomplished in the indicated sections of the transmission line corridor.

Location: The ROW is located in Kootenai and Bonner County, Idaho 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.

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 the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF). Primary uses include timber production, grazing allotments and conservation reserve (not suited for intensive timber production) lands. Public informal uses include hiking, berry/fruit picking, firewood collecting, off-road vehicle and snowmobile use. Coincidental use (general public) in project area will be advised of nature of vegetation control activity. 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. IPNF personnel were notified of the upcoming work by letters, telephone and on-site visits. All issues seem to be resolved at this time.

3. Identify natural resources and any mitigation.

Visually sensitive areas have been identified between spans 23/2 to 25/1. In this area, transmission structures are partially visible when viewed from Lake Pend Oreille. Any vegetation management occurring within this area will be minimized when possible.

Several water resources (i.e. creeks) have been identified between spans 25/4 to 26/1, 32/3 to 32/4, 34/2 to 34/3, 35/6 to 36/1, and 36/3 to 36/4 and 43/1 to 45/1. Threatened and Endangered (T&E) wildlife/plant issues, visually sensitive areas, cultural resources or other natural resource issues have been identified and addressed along the work corridor. The mitigation measures to avoid disturbance to T&E species and cultural resources are listed below:

Bald Eagle

Eagles may nest or winter in areas adjacent to the project. There would be no vegetation management activities during the wintering bald eagle season. If bald eagle activity is observed in the project area, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.

Gray Wolf

There are no known wolf denning or rendezvous sites in or near the project area. The project would occur outside of the denning season. If gray wolf activity is observed in the project area, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.

Grizzly Bear

There are no known grizzly bear denning sites in the project area. The project would occur outside of the denning season. If grizzly bear activity is observed in the project area, the project will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.

North American Lynx

North American lynx are rarely found in open fields or meadows, such as those associated with transmission lines, therefore impacts directly related to vegetation management activities are considered unlikely. There are no known lynx denning sites in the project area. The project would occur outside of the denning season. If lynx activity is observed in the project area, the project will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.

Woodland Caribou

No suitable habitat exists in the project area. If woodland caribou activity is observed in the project area, the project will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.

Bull Trout

Bull Trout are known to inhabit several waterways (i.e. West Gold Creek, Gold Creek, Granite Creek and Johnson Creek) as identified by SreamNet and Northwest Sub Basin Geographic Data databases. These waterways traverse spans 25/4 to 26/1, 32/3 to 32/4, 35/6 to 36/1, and 36/3 to 36/4 and 43/1 to 45/1. All herbicide applications near these waterways and other potential fish bearing waterways will observe the following buffers and mitigation measures to avoid disturbing any potential fish habitat:

- In upland areas, a 100-foot buffer will be maintained during application of Triclopyr.
- In lowland areas, a 25-foot buffer will be maintained during application of Glphosate.
- Low-growing vegetation that provides shade will be protected.
- Vehicles are to be kept away from water channels to minimize erosion and sedimentation of waters.
- Standard erosion control practices will be employed, if necessary, to prevent sedimentation of waters.

Plant Species

No species of plant T&E species are present or have been observed. Only the conditions that support the species are present. The contractor(s) and inspector(s) will be given descriptions of potential plant T&E species and shall be alert to the possibility of occurrence and subsequently avoid disturbance to them.

Cultural Resources

No cultural resources were identified as a result of inquiries with the Kalispell and Coeur d' Alene Tribes. No issues of historical significance were cited. The Tribes cited no potential impacts or concerns regarding the planned vegetation management activities.

Issues concerning wildlife, fish, plants and cultural resources have been addressed and work within the project corridor is expected to have "no effect" on any listed species or cultural resources therefore there would be no cumulative effects for any T&E species within the project corridor. If any T&E animal activity is observed, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed. If archaeological material is discovered during the course of vegetation management activities, all work will be halted and a professional archaeologist will be notified.

Prior to the beginning of the work, the contractor will be provided with a set of the project maps, supplemental information as well as with a list of management prescriptions from the Vegetation Management EIS.

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:

Lop and Scatter – Branches of a fallen tree are cut off (lopped) by axe or chainsaw, so the tree trunk lies flat on the ground. The trunks are occasionally cut in 1 to 2 m (4 to 8 ft) lengths. The cut branches and trunks are then scattered on the ground, laid flat and left to decompose.

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.

Mulched – 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.

5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.

No revegetation will be conducted at this time due to very low ground disturbance. Any need for re-seeding will be continually assessed as the project work progresses and will be performed if the need arises. In addition, equipment will be power washed to prevent the spread of weeds.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

In addition to evaluating work in progress, follow up monitoring will be conducted in the fall of 2003 and the summer of 2004 to determine effectiveness of control.

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* DATE:06/03/2003
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

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
J. Hilliard Creecy – T-DITT2
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)

Mrosales:mr:4722:6/2/2003 (KEP-KEPR/BELL1-W:\EP\2002 & 2003 FILES\EQ\EQ-14\FEIS-0285-SA-152-Lancaster Noxon.doc)

Vegetation Management Checklist
(Lancaster-Noxon)

1. IDENTIFY FACILITY AND THE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT NEED

1.1 Describe Right-of-way.

Corridor Name	Corridor Length & kV	Easement width	Miles of Treatment
Lancaster-Noxon	25 miles; 230-kV	162.5	25

1.2 Describe the vegetation needing management.

Target vegetation is primarily Ponderosa Pine and Douglas fir. Minor amounts of: alder, cottonwood, poplar, chokecherry, and maple species.

Vegetation density is variable, and ranges from sparse (100 stems per acre) to dense (500+ stems per acre).

Tree heights vary, and range from 5 – 60 feet.

Noxious weeds are present, primarily within the primary FS transportation system road right-of-way.

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.

Cut tall-growing vegetation in target areas. Except for roads and structure sites, protect low-growing vegetation. Perform minor stump treatment to reduce sprouting of selected (broadleaf) species.

1.4 Describe overall management scheme/schedule.

Initial entry –Initial entry was in approximately 1972.

Subsequent entries – The most recent entry was approximately 9 years ago.

Future cycles – Anticipate subsequent programmatic entry in approximately 10 years.

2. IDENTIFY SURROUNDING LAND USE AND LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS

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

Idaho Panhandle National Forest manages the project area. Primary uses include timber production, grazing allotments, and conservation reserve (not suited to intensive timber production) lands.

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

Methods of notification to the IPNF personnel include letters, phone calls, and on-site visits.

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

Span		Landowner/use	Specific measures to be applied
To	**From**		
22/2	22/3	FS Managed Lands	Potential FS utilization of timber.
24/2	24/3	FS Managed Lands	Potential FS utilization of timber.
27/3	28/1	FS Managed Lands	Potential FS utilization of timber.
42/5	43/1	FS Managed Lands	Potential FS utilization of timber.
36/1	39/2	Potential grazing sites.	For stump treated areas, post signage with re-entry intervals.

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.

Previous land manager tree growing agreements have been cancelled. No other landowner agreement areas.

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.

Public informal uses include hiking, berry –fruit picking, firewood collecting, ORV and snowmobile use. Coincidental use (general public) in project area will be advised of nature of vegetation control activity.

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.

Inquiries were made to Kalispell and Coeur d' Alene Tribes, seeking comment on planned activities. No issues of historical significance were cited. The Tribes regarding planned activities had no potential impacts or concerns.

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.

Span		Waterbody	T&E?	Method	Herbicide	Application Technique	Buffer	Other
To	From							
25/4	26/1	Yes	Bull Trout	Hand cut	Upland areas: Triclopyr Lowland areas: glyphosate	Hand-held bottle/canister	100 ft. 25 ft.	Low growing veg. that provides shade will be protected
32/3	32/4	Yes	No	Hand Cut	Upland areas: Triclopyr Lowland areas: Glyphosate	Hand-held bottle/canister	100 ft. 25 ft.	Low growing veg. that provides shade will be protected
34/2	34/3	Yes	No	Hand Cut	Upland areas: Triclopyr Lowland areas: Glyphosate	Hand-held bottle/canister	100 ft. 25 ft.	Low growing veg. that provides shade will be protected
35/6	36/1	Yes	Bull Trout	Hand Cut	Upland areas: Triclopyr Lowland areas: Glyphosate	Hand-held bottle/canister	100 ft. 25 ft.	Low growing veg. that provides shade will be protected
36/3	36/4	Yes	Bull Trout	Hand Cut	Upland areas: Triclopyr Lowland areas: Glyphosate	Hand-held bottle/canister	100 ft. 25 ft.	Low growing veg. that provides shade will be protected

43/1	45/1	Yes	Bull Trout	Hand Cut	Upland areas: Triclopyr Lowland areas: Glyphosate	Hand-held bottle/canister	100 ft. 25 ft.	Low growing veg. that provides shade will be protected

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).

All known water resources are shown in Section 3.1

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.

Span		T&E Species	Method/mitigation or avoidance measures
To	From		
		T, E, and S plant list and descriptions are attached. T, E, and S location map is attached. No known occurrence of T, E, or S plants in the corridor.	No species of plant T &E species are present or have been observed. Only the conditions that support the species are present. The contractor(s) and inspector(s) will be given descriptions of potential plant T &E species and shall be alert to the possibility of occurrence and subsequently avoid disturbance to them.
		Gray Wolf	No known denning or rendezvous sites in or near project area.
		Grizzly Bear	No known locations in project area, however, some may be present. If grizzly activity is observed, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.
		Bald Eagle	Eagles may nest or winter in areas adjacent to project. If nesting or roosting activity is observed in project area, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.
21/2	23/1	North American Lynx	No lynx observed in project area. Lynx known to inhabit forested areas at this elevation gradient. Personnel shall maintain an awareness of the potential for lynx. If lynx activity is observed, project activity will be suspended until a revised assessment is performed.
		Woodland Caribou	No suitable habitat exists in project area.

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

No other measures

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

Span		Describe sensitivity	Method/mitigation measures
To	From		
25/1	23/2	Partial visibility of transmission structures when viewed from Lake Pend Oreille	Minimize vegetation control where possible.

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

Kalispell and Coeur d' Alene Tribes have been consulted. No known cultural resources in or near project area.

In the event of inadvertent discovery of cultural resources, all activity near the site will cease until an assessment is performed.

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

Insignificant erosion potential/activity anticipated in project area. Topography ranges from gentle slope (10%) to steep (60+%). Ground disturbance is neither planned nor anticipated.

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

Span		Methods, cutting
To	From	
22/2	31/1	No cutting to be performed where conductor- to- ground clearance exceeds 100 feet. Manual, selective cutting will be performed where clearance is less than 100 feet.

4. DETERMINE VEGETATION CONTROL METHODS

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

Span		Methods
To	From	
47/1	22/1	281 acres on right-of-way will be hand cut.

5. DETERMINE DEBRIS DISPOSAL AND REVEGETATION

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

Approximately 171 acres will be hand cut, lopped, and scattered. Approximately 110 acres will be hand cut and chipped/mulched where anticipated fuel loading will exceed 10 tons/acre.

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

Need to seed is not anticipated. Any need for re-seeding will be continually assessed as project work progresses. Re-seeding will be performed if need arises

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

N/A

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

N/A

6. 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.

In addition to evaluating work-in-progress, anticipate follow-up monitoring in the fall of 2003 and the summer of 2004 to determine effectiveness of control

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

In addition to evaluating work-in-progress, anticipate follow-up monitoring in the fall of 2003 and the summer of 2004 to determine if re-seeding is warranted.

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".

No known potential effects different than those previously discussed.

7.2 Is there a need for additional NEPA documentation

BPA will complete the supplement analysis. Region 1 of the USFS recognizes and accepts (1) BPA's need to perform the work outlined above, and (2), the substantive compliance (herein) as fulfilling the NEPA requirements.