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United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: January 26, 2004

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-192- Ashe-Hanford/Scooteney-Tap

TO: William Erickson – TFP/Walla Walla
Natural Resource Specialist

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management for the Ashe-Hanford (tower 13/1 to 15/2) and Scooteney Tap (tower 2/1+1200 to 4/1+50) line corridor. The Ashe-Hanford line is a 500 kV single circuit transmission line having an easement width of 350 feet. The Scooteney Tap line is a 230 kV single circuit line having an easement width of 262.5 feet on the Department of Energy's Hanford Nuclear Reservation (Reservation) and an easement width of 100 feet on private lands. The proposed work will be accomplished in the indicated sections of the transmission lines as referenced on the attached checklist.

Location: The subject rights-of-way are located in Benton County, WA. being in the Walla Walla Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposal: The work will include the performance of tower pad maintenance and access road maintenance in the referenced areas. Maintenance will include the control of all brush species within 30 feet of transmission structures and controlling all vegetation, except grass along the access roads to provide a 14-foot width for travel. Noxious weed management will also occur on the rights-of- way where needed.

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 is to be performed in areas shown in the table below.

Corridor Name	Corridor Length & kV	Easement width	Miles of Treatment
Ashe Hanford	18 miles of 500 kV	350 ft	2 miles plus access roads
Scooteney Tap	29 miles of 230 kV	262.5 ft	2 miles plus access roads

BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation in the access roads and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission lines. The species include big sagebrush, gray rabbitbrush, green rabbitbrush and other vegetation that, by size or density, might hinder routine inspection and maintenance work or make roads and work areas hazardous. All work will be in accordance with BPA standards outlined in the Vegetation Management EIS and will provide system reliability.

Initial entry - Using hand cutting or mechanical means, BPA will complete brush management in these areas. If needed, the associated stumps and stubble will be treated with herbicides (spot, localized, and broadcast treatments) to ensure that the roots are killed preventing new sprouts and selectively eliminating vegetation that prevents access to the power lines or creates a fire hazard.

Area soil will be replanted or reseeded with low-growing grasses if there is limited vegetation to re-establish the site or soil disturbance has removed the existing vegetation.

Trucks and equipment will be kept on designated access roads so as not disturb desirable plants on the ROW. All work will take place in existing access roads or ROW.

Slash and debris will be pulled at least 10 feet from the road surface and loped and scattered, or will be mulched mechanically. Herbicides may be used to prevent the re-growth of bush species**.**

Subsequent entry - The vegetation management program will be designed to provide a 3-8 year maintenance free interval. The overall vegetation management scheme will be to initially clear and remove all encumbering vegetation using a combination of manual, herbicide and mechanical treatments as outlined in the initial treatment

Future cycles - Future cycles of work will involve hand cutting and mechanical treatments. During routine patrols, the ROW will be examined for encumbering vegetation that will be removed as necessary

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

The entire work site is on the Reservation. Maintenance crews use the subject roads to gain access to transmission line towers, substations and other facilities. The site is currently closed to the public, therefore no casual use by the public is allowed.

3. Identify natural resources and any mitigation.

Since the work site is on the Reservation, which contains numerous cultural and biological resources, BPA has contracted with Pacific National Laboratory (PNL) to perform a cultural and Ecological review to determine if any of these resources would be impacted during the vegetation management work. During the ecological investigation, no plant species protected under the Federal ESA or candidates for such protection were observed in the vicinity of the project area. However, a large area of Piper's daisy, a Washington State sensitive plant species was observed in an area west of tower 03/4 of the Scooteney Tap line. To avoid a 1:1 replacement of the plants, that area will not be disturbed. No vegetation management will occur in that area. Access will be re-routed.

An active red-tailed hawk nest was observed on tower 13/5 and an active raven nest was observed on tower 16/6 of the Ashe-Hanford line. Besides emergency situations only, work in these areas will be avoided during the nesting season.

During a Phase 1 and Phase 2 Cultural investigation, four cultural resource sites were discovered in the area of the work. The areas ranged from a pre-historic animal processing/hunting site to a pre-1960 isolated debris pile. All mitigations outlined in the attached checklist will be followed which will result in a no-affect to these historical properties.

4. Determine vegetation control and debris disposal methods.

All manual, mechanical, biological and herbicidal treatments as prescribed in the Vegetation Management EIS will be used to accomplish the work.

Herbicide use will include Glyphosate, Picloram, Imazapyr, 2,4-d, Escort, clopyralid triclopyr and Dicamba. These may be used for spot-foliar treatments of individual noxious weeds and brush.

Debris disposal will be by mulching and pulling un-mulched debris back 10 feet from the road surface and 30 feet from the tower area.

5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.

Native seeds will be considered in all mixes. Seeding should be completed in the early fall when there is enough moisture to allow for seedlings to develop to the 4-5 leaf stage before winter or in late fall or winter after the soil temperature is below 40 degrees F. Broadcast seeding with follow up harrowing is one method of seeding for small areas. Mulching with weed free straw or hydro mulching may be required to prevent wind erosion in the spring.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

The site will be inspected during treatment. In addition, routine observation by BPA ground and aerial patrols will determine if any follow-up measures will be needed.

7. Prepare appropriate environmental documentation.

Besides the subject cultural and ecological review performed by PNL, no other environmental documentation for the vegetation management should be necessary.

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/ Ken Hutchinson
Ken Hutchinson
Environmental Scientist

CONCUR:*/s/ Thomas C. McKinney* DATE:01/27/2004
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment

cc:
L. Croff – KEC-4
T. McKinney – KEC-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
K. Hutchinson – KEPR/Walla Walla
H. Adams – LC-7
J. Hilliard Creecy – T-DITT2
K. Rodd – TF/DOB-1
M. Richardson – TFP/Walla Walla
G. Wilfong – TFPF/Pasco
Environmental File – KEC
Official File – KEP (EQ-14)

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