

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
SOUTHWESTERN POWER ADMINISTRATION**

**Use of Herbicide for Vegetation Control at VHF Stations, Microwave Stations,
Electrical Substations, and Pole Yards
January 26, 1996**

AGENCY: Southwestern Power Administration, Department of Energy (DOE)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Environmental Assessment for the use of herbicides for vegetation control at electrical substations, radio stations, and pole yards.

SUMMARY: Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that addressed vegetation control at Southwestern's substations, radio stations, and pole yards. The EA studied three methods of vegetation control: (1) no vegetation control (no action), (2) mechanical and manual control, and (3) a combination of mechanical/manual and herbicide control (the proposed action). Based on the analysis developed in the EA, Southwestern has concluded, that with proper herbicide application restrictions, there will be no significant environmental impact to the following:

1. **Air Quality - Restrictions:** Spray pressure and wind velocity limits shall be used to minimize mist formation, duration, and drift.
2. **Surface Water Quality - Restrictions:** Only herbicides registered by EPA for use in surface waters shall be used. These herbicides bind to soil particles or rapidly degrade. These properties minimize the potential for migrating off site in rainfall runoff. Erosion controls shall be established along established drainage pathways to minimize sediment that may contain herbicides from leaving Southwestern property.
3. **Ground Water Quality - Restrictions:** Herbicides that have high soil adsorption and therefore, will have low likelihood of reaching ground water, shall be used. Herbicides shall not be used within 15 feet (4.6 meters) of sinkholes, visible rock fractures in outcrops, sinking creeks, and caverns as identified in the karst formation identification training to be provided to applicators.
4. **Wetlands - Restrictions:** Southwestern facility properties do not have any known wetlands. In addition, the surface water quality restrictions, described

in item 2 above, will minimize any impact on aquatic life from facility rainfall runoff into any off site wetlands.

5. **Wildlife - Restrictions:** Herbicides shall show low oral toxicity to wildlife and shall be used at the application rates recommended by the manufacturer. These rates make it unlikely that any wildlife will receive a toxic dose.
6. **Aquatic Life - Restrictions:** Herbicides shall not be used within 15 feet (4.6 meters) of running water, lakes or ponds where aquatic life may be present. The surface water quality restrictions, described in item 2 above, will further minimize any impact on aquatic life.
7. **Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E) - Restrictions:** Herbicides shall not be used on the likely habitat of T&E species. No known T&E species are located within Southwestern facilities and very few within 1/2 mile (0.8 kilometer) radius of any site. Southwestern will review and update T&E locations with respect to its facilities on an annual basis and revise herbicide application restrictions as necessary.
8. **Cultural Resources - Restrictions:** None, subsurface areas are not disturbed during herbicide application.
9. **Human Health Effects - Restrictions:** Application procedures and Personal Protective Equipment recommended by the manufacturer shall be used to protect application personnel. Sprayer equipment and procedures shall be used which will not allow spray to come within unsafe working distances of live electrical components.
10. **Transportation - Restrictions:** Herbicides shall be transported in the manufacturer's original containers. Material Safety Data Sheets, spill clean-up materials, and appropriate fire extinguishing materials shall be transported with the herbicides.
11. **Disposal of Waste Materials - Restrictions:** Waste herbicide materials and containers shall be disposed according to manufacturers recommendations and applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

James B. Jennings, Project Document Manager
Southwestern Power Administration
P.O. Box 3337
Springfield, MO 65808
Telephone (417) 881-8772

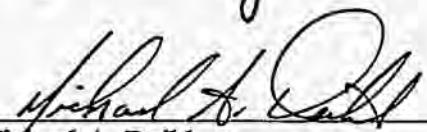
PUBLIC AVAILABILITY:

Copies of the EA and this FONSI are available from Southwestern at the above address.

DETERMINATION:

Based on the EA, Southwestern has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of human health or the environment within the meaning of NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321, *et seq.* The impacts implicit in the above 11 items are all temporary. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required, and Southwestern Power Administration is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Tulsa, OK this 9th day of February 1996.



Michael A. Deihl
Administrator
Southwestern Power Administration