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United States Government **Department of Energy**

Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: 4/13/01

REPLY TO ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-06)

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

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management of annual weeds on seven acres of Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) owned pastureland at the Walla Walla Substation.

Location: The pastureland is adjacent to the Walla Walla Substation and is located east and north of the fenced substation, all within the BPA property boundary.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to apply selected herbicides to control annual weeds that are competing with native grasses that were seeded two years ago. Herbicides will also be applied at the base of the existing wooden transmission line poles located in the pasture area. BPA would conduct the vegetation control with the goal of promoting native grass growth and to provide fire protection for the wooden transmission line poles. The pasture area is, for the most part, flat with elevation increasing towards the northwest corner. Slopes are not steep in that area.

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 pastureland was previously leased to a local cattle owner as grazing land. Because of BPA costs associated with the grazing agreement, it was decided to terminate the lease and reclaim the pastureland by introducing native grasses. The pasture was seeded with perennial native grasses approximately two years ago. Since that time, annual weeds have infiltrated the new growth and are competing with the native grasses. The competing weeds are the noxious weed, yellowstar thistle, other unwanted annual grasses, prickly lettuce and other broadleaf forbs.

In order to preserve the perennial grass growth, these unwanted weeds need to be controlled. An early spring application of selected herbicides will be used to control the early emergers. As the year progresses, mowing throughout the summer and additional herbicide treatment will be needed. This treatment will continue until the desirable grasses are established. It is anticipated that approximately two to three yearly cycles will be needed to establish the desired results.

2. Identify surrounding land use and landowners/managers.

The entire work will take place on BPA fee owned land. The pasture is bordered by an archery equipment manufacturing plant to the southwest, rural housing to the northwest and east, the Walla Walla Substation and US Highway 12 to the south and a county road (Sudbury Road) to the north. Since the work is to be accomplished on BPA fee owned land, no other parties will be affected by the application, and therefore landowner notification is not needed. There are no other potentially affected parties, however, the adjacent landowners have expressed a desire for BPA to control the noxious weeds on our property in an effort to prevent migration of the weeds onto their property.

Also, since the pastureland is a controlled entry area, there is no casual use by the public. Since no public will enter, no signs will be posted advising a non-entry period after treatment.

3. Identify natural resources.

There are no streams, rivers, lakes or wetlands that may be impacted by the herbicide applications at the site. One on-site water well is present, but the well is not used for drinking and is outside of any buffer zones. The adjacent land is irrigated, but no ponding of irrigation water is present. No neighboring wells are known to be within any buffer zones.

Herbicides proposed for use during the work are 2,4-d, dicamba, isoxaben, oryzalin, picloram, chlorsulfuron, metasulfluron-methyl, Tyclopyr, clopyrlid and glyphosate. All are BPA approved for use. All are in the moderately toxic to non-toxic range. Although some of the proposed herbicides carry groundwater or surface water advisories, no water issues are present at the site that would preclude the use of these herbicides. Also, all are approved for use on ROWs except oryzalin, which is approved for landscape uses. A request for approval for use was forwarded. The decision as to which herbicide to use will be made depending on site conditions and weeds present at the time of application.

No other natural resource issues could be identified at the site. There are no T&E species, wildlife habitat issues, visually sensitive areas or cultural resource issues present that would be affected by the herbicide application. There are some sloped areas where the herbicides will be applied, but these are very grassy and no erosion issues should be present.

4. Determine vegetation control and debris disposal methods.

The herbicides will be applied by broadcast method and spot applications by a licensed applicator. Further grass control will be by mowing. All herbicides have been approved for use. Since no debris will be generated during the work, no debris disposal issues are present.

5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.

If areas are found that require reseeding BPA will reseed the affected areas with native grass seeds.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

An inspector will monitor the work being performed. After completion of the initial phase, the site will be monitored throughout the growing season for specific needs. Appropriate actions (mowing or additional herbicide applications) will be conducted.

The progress will be monitored for a period of two to three years until the native grasses have adequately established themselves and are able to out-compete the unwanted vegetation.

7. Prepare appropriate environmental documentation.

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 - KEPR

CONCUR: */s/ Thomas C. McKinney* DATE: *4/23/01*
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

cc:
K. Nakata – DOE/EH-42
M. Hermeston – KEP-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
K. Hutchinson – KEPR/Walla Walla
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P. Key – LC-7
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R. Coila – TFP/Walla Walla
M. Richardson – TFP/Walla Walla
M. Ward – TFPF/Pasco
Environmental File – KEC (EQ-14)
Official File – KEP-4 (EQ-14)

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