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**United States Government** **Department of Energy**

**Bonneville Power Administration**

# memorandum

**DATE:** January 17, 2002

**REPLY TO ATTN OF:** KEPR/Covington

**SUBJECT:** Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-37)

**TO:** Don Atkinson - TFN/Snohomish
Bob Sweet - TFNF/Snohomish

**Proposed Action:** Vegetation Management along the Monroe-Custer No.1 Transmission Line ROW from 29/1+915 to 45/4+975. The transmission line is 500 kV single circuit transmission line. Project includes adjacent Monroe-Custer No.2 and Arlington-Bellingham single circuit transmission lines having a combined ROW width of 421.5 feet. The proposed work will be accomplished in the indicated sections of the transmission line corridor.

**Location:** The ROW is located in Snohomish and Skagit Counties, WA.

**Proposed by:** Snohomish Regional Headquarters, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation in the rights-of-ways and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission line, including both Reclaim and Danger Trees. Also, access road clearing will be conducted. 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. BPA's overall goal is to have low-growing plant communities along the rights-of-way to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation.

**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 (reclaim and danger trees) that currently pose a hazard to the lines; selectively cut, lop and scatter and stump treat brush and other tall growing vegetation that currently or will in the near future pose a threat to the lines, treat the associated stumps and re-sprouts with herbicides to ensure that the roots are killed preventing new sprouts. All work will take place in existing rights-of-ways. 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.

Access roads will be treated using mowing and herbicide applications. The vegetation control is designed to provide a 3-5 year maintenance free interval. The overall vegetation management scheme will initially include selective removal and treatment of tall growing species utilizing cut and stump treat methods using practically non toxic to slightly toxic herbicides as outlined in the attached checklist.

Subsequent work will be needed the following growing season as follow-up to treatment misses and any other re-growth.

Future cycles - As tall growing species are controlled, 5-8 year entry treatments will be needed.

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

The subject corridor traverses rural residential, farms, grazing lands, and small and private forestlands. Landowners will be notified of the upcoming work by letters, personal contact and door hangers.

*3. Identify natural resources.*

Riparian areas and T&E streams (see attached checklist at 3.1) have been identified in the areas of the proposed work. In addition, the project will cross steep slope and spanned canyon areas (see checklist at 3.7 and 3.8).

No other T&E/wildlife issues, visually sensitive areas, cultural resources or other natural resource issues have been identified along the other work corridor.

The herbicides used for vegetation management will be consistent with what is specified in the Vegetation Management FEIS.

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

A licensed contractor would undertake the proposed work. The unwanted vegetation would be removed by employing cut stump, basal and foliar treatment methods. Chemical means would be employed to prevent resprouts from the cut stumps. Herbicides used would be applied by licensed applicators following manufacturers' label instructions and BPA's management prescriptions. Herbicide used would be consistent with the guidance outlined in the Vegetation Management FEIS.

The contractor will receive a list of required mitigation measures (management prescriptions) to follow as well as a set of maps delineating the transmission line and potential sensitive resource areas. The contractor will follow manufacturers' label instructions when applying herbicides.

Debris will be disposed by:

Lop and Scatter - (Branches of a fallen tree are cut off (lopped) by ax 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.) Mowing and mulching along access roads.

*5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.*

Re-seeding will occur only along those places were soil disturbance has occurred.

*6. Determine monitoring needs.*

An inspector will monitor the work being performed at the time of the initial work. Follow-up inspections will be preformed during routine regular patrols. Additional required work would be identified at that time.

*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/ Mark A. Martin*
Mark A. Martin
Environmental Protection Specialist

CONCUR: */s/ Thomas C. McKinney* DATE: *1/18/2002*
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachments

cc:
L. Croff – KEC-4
T. McKinney – KEC-4
M. Hermeston – KEP-4
J. Meyer – KEP-4
J. Sharpe – KEPR-4
P. Key – LC-7
D. Hollen – TF/DOB-1
S. Davis – TFN/Snohomish
L. Alvarez – TFN/Snohomish
Environmental File – KEC
Official File – KEP-4 (EQ-14)

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