

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 5, 2001

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP/Z992

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS
(DOE/EIS-0285/SA-25)

TO: Elizabeth Johnson – TFR/The Dalles
Jim Jellison – TFO/Olympia

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along selected ROW sections of the Ostrander-Pearl transmission line. The ROWs include sections of the Ostrander-Pearl 500 kV line; the Ostrander-McLoughlin 500 kV line; the Big Eddy-Chemawa 230 kV line and the Big Eddy-McLoughlin 230 kV line.

Location: The ROW is located in Clackamas County, Oregon, within the Olympia Region.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation in the rights-of-way and around tower structures that may impede the operation and maintenance of the subject transmission lines. The project also includes clearing approximately 3 miles of access road and cutting of some danger trees. 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 lines and to promote low-growing plant communities in the right-of-way and to clear vegetation from new rights-of-way corridors.

See Section 1.1 of the attached checklist for pertinent information on each section of referenced 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.

A variety of vegetation needs control including Douglas Fir, True Fir, Hemlock, Pine, Alder, Maple, Oak, Willow, Birch, Poplar, Cedar, Cottonwood, Cherry, and residential and orchard trees. A number of noxious weeds are also in need of control including, blackberries, poison oak, scotch broom and tansey.

The work involved in the ROW includes: clearing tall growing vegetation that is currently or will soon pose a hazard to the lines; treating the associated stumps and re-sprouts with herbicide to ensure that the roots are killed preventing new sprouts 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, access road corridors, and around transmission structures. 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. The work will provide system reliability and fire protection.

The vegetation control is designed to provide a 3-4 year maintenance free schedule. The overall vegetation management scheme will initially include selective removal and treatment of tall growing species in the fall of 2001 with follow up treatment in the spring and summer of 2002 to treat misses and any other re-growth. Future cycles will be every 3-4 years to control re-sprouts, noxious weeds and invading tall growing species.

2. Identify surrounding land use and landowners/managers.

The subject corridors traverse residential, rural, and agricultural lands. They are either all fee owned, all easement or a combination of the two. Surrounding landowners and land managers will be contacted by letter within 2 weeks prior to commencing work.

3. Identify natural resources.

Riparian areas, T&E streams, springs, and wetlands have been identified in areas of the proposed work. Mitigation measures include use of buffers, selective use of herbicides, and selective cutting as identified in Section 3.1 of the attached checklist and as identified in the Vegetation Control Prescription, also attached.

Two wells have also been identified along the project corridors. Mitigation measures again include the use of buffers as identified in the attached documents.

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

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

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 will undertake the proposed work. Unwanted vegetation will be removed by employing manual (hand cutting), mechanical and herbicide application methods. Chemical means would be employed to prevent resprouts of broad leaf species. Prevention of resprouts encourages low-growing plant communities to establish themselves and flourish on the right-of-way. This impact avoidance approach both maximizes the use of limited resources and minimizes environmental impacts. 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.

Debris disposal methods will be by lop and scatter when vegetation is light and by mowing or mulching in areas of heavier vegetation.

The attached Vegetation Control Prescription lists the proposed herbicides, methods of application, application techniques and buffers to be used.

5. Determine revegetation methods, if necessary.

Reseeding will be determined during operations and will likely occur on access roads. Seeding, if necessary will occur in early spring and late fall periods.

6. Determine monitoring needs.

An inspector will monitor the work being performed at the time of the initial work. Additional required work would be identified at that time and scheduled for the following spring if necessary.

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/ Elaine Stratton

Elaine Stratton

Environmental Protection Specialist - KEP

CONCUR: /s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 9/5/2001

Attachments

cc:

L. Croff – KEC-4

M. Hermeston – KEP-4

J. Sharpe – KEP-4

E. Stratton – KEP/Z992

P. Key – LC-7

D. Hollen – TF/DOB-1

M. Johnson – TF/DOB-1

D. Krauss – TFO/Olympia

S. Martin – TFO/Olympia

D. Swanson – TFOP/LMT

Environmental File – KEC-4

Official File – KEP-4 (EQ-14)

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(KEP-KEP-4-W:\EP\2000 & 2001 FILES\EQ\Eq-14\FEIS-0285-SA-25-Ostr-Pearl.doc)