

memorandum

DATE: February 9, 2018

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: EP/Celilo

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-681)

TO: Joe Johnson
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV-Kallispell

Proposed Action: Vegetation Management along the Swan Valley - Teton and Targhee Tap Transmission Lines

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project No.: 3869

Location: Teton County, Wyoming and Bonneville County, Idaho

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposal: BPA proposes to clear unwanted vegetation along and adjacent to the transmission line corridors and access roads of the Swan Valley - Teton No. 1 transmission line from structure 1/1 to the Teton Substation, and the Targhee Tap line from structure 1/1 to the Taghee Substation. The right-of-way (ROW) corridors in the proposed project area measure from 125 to 155 feet in width and cross a combined total of approximately 46 miles of terrain. The Swan Valley-Teton line is on land owned by the United States Forest Service lands and the Targhee tap is primarily private, rural residential property.

Representatives from the Caribou – Targhee and Bridge – Teton National Forests were notified of the proposed project in March of 2017 during an annual planning meeting. A follow-up contact will be made prior to project initiation. Letters, on-site meetings, emails, or phone calls would be used to notify private landowners approximately three weeks prior to commencing vegetation management activities. Door hangers would also be used at properties where special treatments are anticipated.

To comply with Western Electricity Coordinating Council standards, BPA proposes to manage vegetation with the goal of removing tall-growing vegetation that is currently or will soon become a hazard to the transmission line (a hazard is defined as one or more branches, tops, and/or whole trees that could fall or grow into the minimum safety zone of the transmission line(s) causing an electrical arc, relay and/or outage). The overall goal of BPA is to establish low-growing plant communities along the ROW to control the development of potentially threatening vegetation.

A combination of selective and nonselective vegetation control methods that may include hand cutting, mowing, and herbicidal treatment would be used to perform the work. Herbicides would be selectively applied using spot treatment (stump or stubble treatment, basal treatment, and/or spot foliar), or localized treatments (broadcast application and cut stubble treatments)

with chemicals approved in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000), to ensure that the roots are killed preventing new sprouts and selectively eliminating vegetation that interferes with the operation and maintenance of transmission infrastructure. Approximately 1,035 acres of ROW and 13 miles of access road would be initially treated in summer 2018. A follow-up treatment of re-sprouting target vegetation may be conducted within a year. Additional vegetation management may be necessary in subsequent years in discrete areas of noxious weeds, or where BPA personnel discover vegetation that poses a hazard to the transmission line. All debris would be disposed of along the ROW, using on-site chip, lop and scatter, or mulching techniques.

Analysis: A Vegetation Control Prescription & Checklist was developed for this corridor that incorporates the requirements identified in BPA's Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) (August 23, 2000). The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures outlined in the Vegetation Control Prescription & Checklist.

Water Resources: Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are noted in the Vegetation Control Prescription. As conservation and avoidance measures, only spot and localized treatment with Garlon 3A (Triclopyr TEA) would be used within a 100-foot buffer up to the water's edge of any stream containing threatened or endangered species. Trees in riparian zones would be selectively cut to include only those that will grow into the minimum approach distances of the conductor at maximum sag, other trees would be left in place or topped to preserved shade. Shrubs that are less than 10-feet-high would not be cut where ground to conductor clearance allows. No ground-disturbing vegetation management methods would be implemented, thus eliminating the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near the streams.

Endangered Species Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act: Pursuant to its obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA has made a determination of whether its proposed project would have any effects on any listed species. A species list was obtained for federally-listed, proposed and candidate species potentially occurring within the project boundaries from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Based on the ESA review conducted, BPA made a determination that the project would have "No Effect" for all ESA-listed species under USFWS' jurisdiction. BPA also conducted a review of species under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). A determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA-listed species under NMFS' jurisdiction, with the implementation of the conservation measures in the Water Resources section above.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are known for the project area. If a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist and BPA archeologist would be contacted. In addition, equipment would be power-washed to prevent the spread of weeds.

Re-Vegetation: Native grasses are present on the entire ROW and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that would have lightly disturbed soil predominately located on the ROW roads.

Monitoring: The entire project would be inspected during the work period Fall 2018 through fall 2019. Additional monitoring and follow-up treatments may be conducted as necessary. A

diary of inspection results would be used to document formal inspections and would be filed with the contracting officer.

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/ Frederick Walasavage
Frederick Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

CONCUR: */s/ Stacy L. Mason* DATE: *-February 9, 2018*
Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

References:
Vegetation Management Prescription and Checklist
Effects Determination