

memorandum

DATE: October 28, 2020

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: EP-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285/SA-758)

TO: Daniel Misch
Natural Resource Specialist – TFBV- KALISPELL

Proposed Action: Funding of Noxious Weed Treatments Carried Out by the United States Forest Service in the Kootenai National Forest, FY2021 – FY2025

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project No.: 4536

Location: Flathead and Lincoln counties, Montana

Description of the Proposal: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund noxious weed management, to be conducted by the United States Forest Service (USFS), Kootenai National Forest (KNF) from fiscal year (FY) 2021 through FY2025. Noxious weed management activities would be focused on, but not limited to, the following areas of BPA right-of-way (ROW) where noxious weeds have been identified:

- the 115-kilovolt (kV) Columbia Falls-Trego No. 1 corridor between Structure 37/1 and Trego Substation in the Fortine Ranger District;
- the 230-kV Noxon-Libby No. 1 corridor from structure 15/5 to 17/1, and from 46/4 to 64/5, in the Libby Ranger District. This includes the 230-kv Libby-Conkelly No. 1 from structure 7/1 to 25/1; and
- the 115-kV Libby-Bonnors Ferry No. 1 corridor from structure 40/5 to Yaak Substation in the Three Rivers Ranger District. The following line segments on USFS Parcels would also be treated: 24/5-25/6, 26/7-28/1, 28/5-28/8, 30/1-30/7, 37/6-38/5, 36/8-37/2.

The objective of the proposed noxious weed management project is to control Montana Priority 1B, 2A and 2B weeds growing within BPA ROWs and along BPA access roads. Noxious weed species targeted by this project include rush skeletonweed, tansy ragwort, spotted knapweed, orange and meadow hawkweeds, common tansy, St. Johnswort, Canada thistle, oxeye daisy, and yellow and Dalmatian toadflax.

A combination of the chemical (herbicide) and biological treatment techniques would be used to perform the work. These techniques are compatible with both BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000), and the USFS's Kootenai National Forest Invasive Plant Management FEIS (March 2007). All herbicide applications would be in accordance label requirements and other applicable laws. Herbicide applicators would be certified by a pesticide applicator certification plan approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Analysis: A plan was developed by BPA and the USFS for these corridors that incorporate the requirements identified in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS and Record of Decision (August 23, 2000), and USFS's Kootenai National Forest Invasive Plant Management FEIS.

Water Resources: Only herbicides and applications methods approved by BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS would be used in accordance with the buffer distances specified in Table III-1 of BPA's FEIS.

Endangered Species: The KNF determined that actions carried out under the Invasive Plant Management FEIS *may affect* [but is] *not likely to adversely affect* grizzly bear, Canada lynx and the bull trout. It was also determined that actions would have *no effect* on white sturgeon, water howellia, and the Spalding's campion. Concurrence with these conclusions was received from US Fish and Wildlife Service on November 30, 2006 and concurrence with reinitiated consultation on the grizzly bear was received on April 13, 2007.

Cultural Resources: The proposed vegetation management action would not result in substantial ground disturbance to the physical environment, so the action is not one that typically has the potential to affect historic and/or cultural resources. If a site is discovered during the course of noxious weed management, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the USFS and BPA Archeologists would be contacted.

Re-Vegetation: Existing naturalized grasses and woody shrubs are present on the entire ROW and are expected to naturally seed into the areas that would have lightly-disturbed soil predominantly located on the ROW roads. Competitive vegetation may be planted to reduce noxious weeds.

Monitoring: Monitoring from FY2021 to FY 2025 would be completed by the USFS Weed Coordinator(s). Monitoring would consist of a field review of areas where BPA has funded control measures, and documentation/reporting would be provided to BPA within approximately one month of the field review.

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/ Oden W. Jahn
Oden W. Jahn
Environmental Scientist

CONCUR:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 28, 2020

cc:
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