

Supplement Analysis
for the
Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS
(DOE/EA/EIS-0285/SA-772)

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project Number 4668
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Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Activities

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund noxious weed management, to be conducted by the United States Forest Service (USFS), Caribou-Targhee National Forest, from fiscal year (FY) 2021 through FY 2025, in Bonneville, Fremont, and Teton Counties, Idaho, and Teton County, Wyoming. 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:

Site #1: Palisades-Cattle Creek No. 1 right-of-way (Approx. 11 Line Miles)

All areas of the Palisades-Cattle Creek No. 1 right-of-way and power line access roads that are located on the Palisades Ranger District. Generally includes the Fall Creek drainage (towers 13/2 to 23/5) with small sections in the Indian Creek (towers 9/4 to 9/7), and Papoose Creek drainages (towers 11/5 to 12/2).

Site #2: Swan Valley-Teton No. 1 & 2 right-of-way and access roads located on Palisades and Teton Basin Ranger Districts (Approx. 23 Line Miles). Generally includes Trail Creek drainage, the south end of Teton Basin along the Forest boundary, and both Pine Creek drainages along Highway 31. This includes the towers 5/2 to 28/4 and associated access roads.

Site #3: BPA Forest boundary above Warm River Campground to State Line (Approx. 37 Line Miles) Right-of-way and power line access roads on the Ashton/Island Park Ranger Districts. Specifically includes:

Drummond-Macks Inn No. 1 Line

1. Forest boundary above Warm River Campground (BPA Tower 10/8) to Gerrit Meadows (BPA Tower 18/5) on Warm River road (#150).
2. Gerrit Meadows (BPA Tower 18/5) to Baker Draw road (#161, BPA Tower #26/2).
3. Baker Draw road (#161, BPA Tower 26/2) to Buffalo River crossing (BPA Tower 34/6).
4. Buffalo river crossing (BPA Tower 34/6) to Macks Inn Substation.

Macks Inn-Madison No. 1 Line

1. Macks Inn Substation to State Line (BPA Tower 10/6).

The objective of the proposed action is to control noxious weeds within approximately 72 BPA transmission line easements and associated access roads. Approximately 150 acres of noxious weeds have been located in the above referenced treatment sites.

The forest would utilize an integrated pest management approach for the treatment of noxious weeds on the BPA right-of-way and access road associated with this agreement. Treatment methods would consist of chemical, mechanical, and biological applications. These techniques are compatible with BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (DOE/EIS-0285, May 2000). All herbicide applications would be according to state and local laws. All applicators must be licensed in the state where applications are performed. A copy of the herbicide applicators license must be submitted to BPA before beginning herbicide application.

Analysis

A noxious weed management 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).

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 Act and Magnuson-Stevens Act: The U.S Forest Service Caribou-Targhee National Forest determined that actions carried out under the Caribou Targhee National Forest and Curlew National Grassland Invasive Species Project *may affect* [but is] *not likely to adversely affect* grizzly bear, Canada lynx, yellow-billed cuckoo and yellow-billed cuckoo designated critical habitat, and Ute ladies'-tresses. Concurrence with these conclusions was received from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on June 25, 2021.

Cultural Resources: Weed control activities will be focused on noxious weeds and will not indiscriminately treat non-targeted vegetation. The type of activities would not result in ground disturbance except in very limited circumstances potentially due to pulling weeds by hand. On August 20, 2021, BPA determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

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.

Monitoring: The entire treatment site will be monitored for success of weed control and eradication. New weed species and new site infestations will be documented and mapped for further treatment and monitoring. Each District will prepare an annual accomplishment report to be presented to the BPA at the spring coordination meeting.

Findings

BPA finds that the types of actions and the potential impacts related to the proposed activities have been examined, reviewed, and consulted upon and are similar to those analyzed in the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD. There are no substantial changes in the EIS's Proposed Action and no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns bearing on the EIS's Proposed Action or its impacts within the meaning of 10 CFR § 1021.314(c)(1) and 40 CFR §1502.9(d). Therefore, no further NEPA analysis or documentation is required.

/s/ Aaron Siemers
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Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *August 23, 2021*

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