

Supplement Analysis
for the
Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS
(DOE/EA/EIS-0285/SA-778)

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project Number: 4518
Natural Resource Specialist/Project Manager: Chester (JR) French-TFBV-3

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Activities

BPA proposes to remove the tops of approximately 81 trees that are interfering with the signal strength in the telecommunication corridors between Noti Radio Site (RS) and Eugene Substation, and between Noti RS and Goodwin Peak RS, in Lane County, Oregon.

The proposed project area encompasses approximately 4.6 acres on land managed by United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Northwest Oregon District.

BPA would coordinate with the BLM Northwest Oregon District Office to secure the rights to remove these trees. BPA proposes to “top” the vast majority of trees, leaving them at a height as high as possible, and with as many live limbs remaining as possible, while meeting BPA’s clearing needs and safety requirements. Felling of certain whole trees may be completed if needed to avoid snags falling into a roadway, or for trees under 10” DBH (Diameter at Breast Height). To the extent possible, green limbs and the largest dead limbs would be retained on the treated trees during the climbing and topping operations. BPA would ensure that tree tops would be completely severed from the tree, and that they would fall completely to the ground. Debris would be lopped and scattered and left in a manner to reduce slash, reduce potential fuels load, keep roads and ditches clear, and reduce fire risk. Debris depth would not exceed six inches. No ground-disturbing equipment would be used. The work would take place from September 2021 through Spring 2022, unless otherwise approved by BLM.

Analysis

Vegetation Control Cut Sheets were developed for these two microwave beam paths that incorporated the requirements identified in BPA’s Transmission System Vegetation Management Program FEIS and Record of Decision (August 23, 2000). The following summarizes natural resources occurring in the project area along with applicable mitigation measures outlined in the Vegetation Control Cut Sheets.

Water Resources

There are no water bodies (lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands) occurring in, or adjacent to, the project area.

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 from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) containing federally-listed, proposed, and candidate species potentially occurring in the project area, as well as designated critical habitat. By

performing the work between September 2021 and Spring 2022, the proposed vegetation management activities are within the scope of activities and action area evaluated in the BLM's Biological Assessment Regarding Habitat Alteration Projects in FY 2018-2019 that are Likely to Adversely Affect the Northern Spotted Owl, the Marbled Murrelet, and their Critical Habitats, as proposed by the Northwest Oregon District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM 2017), as well as the accompanying Biological Opinion (USFWS 2017) or the most recent consultation for terrestrial species on the NW Oregon District.

There are no water bodies occurring in, or adjacent to, the project area. A review of ESA-listed species, critical habitat, and Essential Fish Habitat (as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Act), under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is not necessary, as the project would have no potential to affect those species or habitats.

Cultural Resources

The proposed vegetation management actions do not result in 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 historical or pre-historical ruins, graves or markers, fossils or artifacts are discovered during the course of vegetation maintenance, work would be stopped in the vicinity, the site would be protected, and the BPA Environmental Specialist, the BPA Archaeologist, and the BLM Archaeologist would be promptly 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.

Monitoring

The entire project would be inspected during the work period, and signal strength would be re-assessed, in following the work, estimated to take place in Fall 2021. A vendor scorecard of inspection results would be used to document formal inspections and would be filed with the contracting officer.

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/ Oden Jahn

Oden Jahn
Natural Resource Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 3, 2021

References:

Vegetation Control Cut Sheets