

Supplement Analysis
for the
Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS
(DOE/EA/EIS-0285/SA-779)

Pollution Prevention and Abatement Project Number 4727
Natural Resource Specialist/Project Manager: Craig Fackrell – TFBV – Bell - 1

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Activities

BPA proposes to remove one tree, side limbs, and one top of approximately five trees that are interfering with the signal strength in two telecommunication corridors (beam paths) between Albeni Falls Radio Site (RS) and Mt. Spokane Radio Site (RS) in – Mt. Spokane in Bonner County, Idaho.

The proposed project area encompasses approximately 0.2 acres on land managed by United States Army Corps of Engineers and North Bonner Sewer District.

BPA coordinated with North Bonner Sewer and the USACE to in September of 2021 to secure rights to remove these trees. Letters, on-site meetings, emails, and phone calls would be used to notify landowners. BPA proposes to remove one tree, side limb four trees and “top” one tree with as many live limbs remaining as possible, while meeting BPA’s clearing needs and safety requirements. 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 removed from USACE property and lopped and scattered and left in a manner to reduce slash, potential fuels load, keep roads and ditches clear, and fire risk on North Bonner Sewer property. No ground-disturbing equipment would be used. The work would take place September 2021 – March 2022, unless otherwise approved.

Analysis

A Vegetation Control Cut Sheet was 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 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 and designated critical habitat under USFWS’ jurisdiction.

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 a site is discovered during the course of vegetation control, work would be stopped in the vicinity and the BPA Environmental Specialist and the BPA archeologist 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.

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 will 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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz
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Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 9, 2021

References:

Vegetation Control Cut Sheets