

**Supplement Analysis**  
for the  
**Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS**  
(DOE/EA/EIS-0285/SA-870)

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

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Activities**

BPA proposes to remove approximately 1,250 danger trees within and immediately adjacent to the right-of-way (ROW) of the Priest River Tap to Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No 1 transmission line in Bonner County, Idaho. The purpose of the proposed action is to protect the power system by minimizing the risk of trees contacting energized transmission lines. Vegetation management needs were assessed, and Vegetation Control Cut Sheets were created for the right-of-way corridor and associated access roads along these transmission assets.

BPA defines danger trees as those trees with a 50 percent or greater probability of structural failure within five years due to physical damage or environmental conditions. This project would utilize conventional cutting methods to cut trees. Prescriptions for retention or removal of cut trees are dependent on the area and volume in which they occur. All debris would be disposed of onsite, along the ROW, using cut, lop, and scatter techniques, and in accordance with underlying landowner agreements.

The corridor in the proposed project area measures approximately 50 ft. in width and covers approximately three miles of terrain through private timber and rangeland. Letters, on-site meetings, emails, and phone calls would be used to notify landowners approximately three weeks prior to commencing vegetation management activities. Door hangers would also be used at properties where special treatments are anticipated. Any additional measures proposed by landowners or land managers through ongoing communication would be incorporated into the vegetation management plan during project implementation.

**Analysis**

A Vegetation Control Cut Sheet was developed for this corridor 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**

Water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands) occurring in the project area are noted in the Vegetation Control Cut Sheets. Trees in riparian zones would be selectively cut to include only those that would 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 minimizing the risk for soil erosion and sedimentation near streams.

#### 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 ESA-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). The proposed vegetation management work is within the scope of activities and action area evaluated in USFWS letter of concurrence (LOC) regarding Northern Idaho Inspection and Vegetation Management FY23, consultation number 2021-I-1822, sent to BPA in September 2021, with a LOC modification send to BPA in November 2021.

BPA conducted a review of ESA-listed species, designated critical habitat, and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) (as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Act), under the jurisdiction of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). However, none were found in the project area. BPA made a determination that the project would have “No Effect” for all ESA-listed fish species and designated critical habitat under NMFS’ jurisdiction, and the project would have no adverse effect on EFH.

#### Cultural Resources

All activities were reviewed for their potential to affect historic and/or 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 cultural resource is discovered at any point during vegetation control activities, work would be stopped in the vicinity of the discovery location and the BPA Environmental Specialist and the BPA Archaeologist 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.

#### Monitoring

The entire project would be inspected during the work period, Winter 2024 through Fall 2024. A follow-up treatment may occur after the initial treatment. Additional monitoring for follow-up treatment would be conducted as necessary. A vendor scorecard 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/ Zoe Wellschlager*  
Zoe Wellschlager  
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Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer      Date: February 21, 2024

References:  
Priest River Tap Cut Sheet