



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 61409
Vancouver, WA 98666-1409

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

September 27, 2016

In reply refer to: TEP-CSB-1

To: People Interested in the Marys Peak BPA Communication Site Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) needs to maintain and upgrade its existing communication site located in Benton County, Oregon. This letter briefly describes the location of this existing BPA communication site and explains the need to conduct work at the site. It also outlines BPA's environmental review process and proposed schedule, and is an invitation to a public meeting where you can learn more about the project need, and offer comments and input.

The existing BPA communication site is on the summit of Marys Peak, located about 12 miles southwest of Corvallis, Oregon. The communication site is located on lands managed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), Central Coast Ranger District of the Siuslaw National Forest. The site is located within the Marys Peak Scenic Botanical Area, which is managed by the Forest Service under the terms of the Siuslaw National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990) as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (USDA USDI 1994). Accordingly, BPA is currently coordinating with the USFS concerning its project. BPA is also coordinating with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) since some project activities could occur on lands administered by the BLM.

Need for Project - The BPA communication network is essential for the safety and reliability of BPA's power transmission system. The existing Marys Peak BPA communication site provides for real-time voice communication, via VHF radio, between BPA's dispatch and control centers and the BPA field crews working in the region. This communication network allows for critical information exchange during emergencies, safe and timely power restoration during outages, and supports control of the larger regional BPA power transmission network in the Pacific Northwest.

BPA needs to upgrade and maintain outdated and unstable equipment at the communication site. Some equipment can no longer be repaired and needs to be replaced. The existing BPA UHF radio dish is attached to an aging and unstable single wood-pole structure. During winter months, the extreme wind and ice conditions on this mountaintop location cause the pole and the dish to shift and misalign, which impairs communication. During the summer months, sensitive communication equipment contained within the BPA building is subject to high temperatures that could damage the equipment and cause failure.

The BPA communication site needs a more reliable back-up power source due to potential power outages and inaccessibility during storms at this remote site during the winter months. In those conditions, it can take significant time to restore power, and communications systems may not work.

Environmental Review Process - BPA is beginning the environmental review of the proposed project. BPA plans to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to identify potential alternatives, analyze potential impacts of each alternative, and identify mitigation measures that would help avoid or minimize those impacts. Potential solutions to be considered in addition to maintaining and upgrading the existing BPA facility include consolidation of the BPA facility with the nearby USFS facility (within the common fence) or moving the BPA communications facility to a non-Marys Peak site. The draft EA will be provided to the public for review and comment, and the final agency decision will be made after taking into consideration all comments.

During the EA process, BPA will work with federal, state and local agencies, tribes, landowners, and interest groups. Both the USFS and the BLM have agreed to participate as cooperating agencies under NEPA on the EA. At this time, we are asking for your comments to help determine the alternatives that should be considered, the resources and potential impacts to those resources that should be addressed in the EA, and any potential solutions, issues, or concerns. We have scheduled an informal, open-house scoping meeting to answer questions and accept comments about the scope of the EA:

Wednesday, November 9, 2016

4:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Philomath High School Community Room
2054 Applegate Street
Philomath, OR

Please send your comments by **December 2, 2016**, and identify them as “Marys Peak BPA Communication Site Project” so they may be considered in the scope of the EA. All comments will be posted in their entirety on the project website. There are several ways to comment:

Mail: Bonneville Power Administration
Public Affairs – DKE-7
P.O. Box 14428
Portland, OR 97291-4428

Toll-free: 800-622-4519
FAX: 503-230-4019
Online: www.bpa.gov/comment

The expected schedule for the EA process is as follows:

Scoping comment period	September 27 through December 2, 2016
Draft EA available for public comment	Spring 2018
Final EA	Fall 2018
Finding of No Significant Impact (if warranted)	Fall 2018
If decision to proceed, construction could start as early as Summer 2019	

For More Information:

You may visit the project website listed above or call the toll-free number listed above.

For questions regarding the environmental process, please contact Kimberly St.Hilaire, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 503-230-5361 or krsthilaire@bpa.gov, or Becky Hill, Contract Environmental Protection Specialist, Flux Resources, LLC at 503-230-7312, or rlhillclark@bpa.gov.

For questions about the project proposal, please contact me at 360-619-6276 or bbyounce@bpa.gov. You may also contact Molly Kovaka, Senior Project Manager, Flux Resources, LLC at 360-619-6262 or mckovaka@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Benjamin Younce

Benjamin Younce
Project Manager

Enclosures:
Project Map
Comment Form
Return Envelope
Reply Card