

Bonneville Power Administration Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0285)

Responsible Agency: Bonneville Power Administration (Bonneville), U.S. Department of Energy

Cooperating Agencies: U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Agriculture; Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of Interior

Title of Proposed Action: Transmission System Vegetation Management Program

States Involved: California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

Abstract: Bonneville is responsible for maintaining a network of 24,000 kilometers (km) or 15,000 miles (mi.) of electric transmission lines and 350 substations in a region of diverse vegetation. This vegetation can interfere with electric power flow, pose safety problems for us and the public, and interfere with our ability to maintain these facilities. We need to (1) keep vegetation away from our electric facilities; (2) increase our program efficiency and consistency; (3) review herbicide use (under increased public scrutiny); and (4) maximize the range of tools we can use while minimizing environmental impact (Integrated Vegetation Management). This DEIS establishes Planning Steps for managing vegetation for specific projects (to be tiered to this EIS). In addition to No Action (current practice), alternatives are presented for Rights-of-way, Electric Yards, and Non-electric Facilities (landscaping, work yards). Four vegetation control methods are analyzed: manual, mechanical, herbicide, and biological. Also evaluated are 24 herbicide active ingredients and 4 herbicide application techniques (spot, localized, broadcast, and aerial). For rights-of-way, we consider three sets of alternatives: alternative management approaches (time-driven or establishing low-growing plant communities); alternative method packages; and, if herbicides are in a methods package, alternative vegetation selections (noxious weeds, deciduous, or any vegetation). For electric yards, one herbicide-use alternative is considered. For non-electric facilities, two method package alternatives are considered. For rights-of-way, the environmentally preferred alternative(s) would use manual, mechanical, and biological control methods, as well as spot and localized herbicide applications for noxious and deciduous plant species; the BPA-preferred alternative(s) would add broadcast and aerial herbicide applications, and would use herbicides on any vegetation. Both would favor a management approach that fosters low-growing plant communities.

Public comment is being accepted through October 9, 1999.

For additional information:

Stacy Mason
Bonneville Administration
P.O. Box 3621-KECP
Portland OR 97208-3621
(503) 230-5455
slmason@bpa.gov

Please mail comments to:

Bonneville Power Administration
Communications Office
P.O. Box 12999
Portland OR 97212
comment@bpa.gov

To receive additional copies of the DEIS or of the Summary, call BPA's document request line at 1-800-622-4520. You may access the EIS on our web site at <http://www.bpa.gov/vegmngt>

For information on Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) activities, please contact:

Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington D.C. 20585, 1-800-472-2756; or visit the DOE NEPA Web at www.eh.doe.gov/nepa