Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are nonrenewable evidence of human occupation or activity. Historic properties, a subset of cultural resources, consist of any district, site, building, structure, artifact, ruin, object, work of art, architecture, or natural feature important in human history at the national, state, or local level. Several investigations were conducted to determine the existence of any cultural resources in the project area.

Eastern Washington University conducted the first study for BPA in 1994. The study area that was surveyed for the 1994 cultural resources investigation includes the existing corridor and access road system and any surrounding area that could be affected. Resources were divided into prehistoric and historic resources. Thirty-one prehistoric sites, seven historic sites, and two sites of unknown origin were identified.

A second study, an archaeological field survey conducted by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, was completed in May 2002. The study area, or Area of Potential Effect (***APE***), for this survey is a 100-foot wide corridor that encompasses the route of the proposed 500-kV line. The 31 sites previously recorded in 1994 were revisited and the information updated as necessary. In addition, an assessment of potential impacts to traditional cultural properties was completed by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

A third archaeological survey that encompassed the expansion area at Bell Substation was conducted by Applied Archaeological Research in May 2002. In addition to documenting the presence or absence of cultural resources, a purpose of the survey was to determine if the project APE was formerly part of a pauper cemetery for the City of Spokane and/or Spokane County in the early 1900s and to assess its potential to contain unmarked human burials.

Additional surveys will be undertaken as needed until project design is complete and all locations of towers and any new roads are known. The Spokane Tribe will also be providing an assessment of potential impacts to traditional cultural properties.

Affected Environment

Prehistoric Resources

The 1994 survey identified 29 prehistoric sites as pits in basalt ***talus***, a site type common in east-central Washington. Often, sites are a number of circular pits, 3 to 7 feet in diameter and 0.7 to 2.0 feet deep, though pits can occur alone, have different forms, and can be larger or smaller than this size range. Native Americans used talus pits for both burial and food storage (cache) activities.

Few recorded talus pits in eastern Washington have been excavated. Human remains were recovered from talus sites (not part of this project) in major eastern Washington river valleys and in the lower Grand Coulee. Nine talus pits at three sites near Creston, Washington (not part of this project) were excavated and no prehistoric cultural resources were found.

Many talus pit sites have been recorded in eastern Washington, but little is known about the origin, contents, and use of the talus pit sites. Depressions in talus are not always made by humans. Conversely, if no human artifacts are found, it does not mean the pits are natural. No reliable criteria exists to separate cultural and natural talus pits if no cultural or natural remains exist.

The other two prehistoric sites identified by the 1994 survey are a campsite and a mound of stones erected as a memorial or landmark, called a ***cairn***.

Seven new archaeological sites were located and recorded in the project area or immediate vicinity during the 2002 survey; five are prehistoric and two are historic. Four of the prehistoric sites are rock features (shelter or cairns); two of these are not within the 500-kV transmission line corridor but are near the 115-kV that would be dismantled. Two of these sites are probably eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (***NRHP***), one is probably not eligible, and the other would require further evaluation. The fifth site is a ***lithic*** scatter within the corridor; it would probably not be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Ten other locations were recorded as isolated finds, consisting usually of individual prehistoric artifacts or low density scatters of historic artifacts; the isolated finds do not require further management and are not discussed further herein.

In addition, many of the 31 previously recorded sites that were re-examined in 2002 were considered not to be cultural in origin.

Historic Resources

The 1994 survey identified seven historic cultural sites in or next to the corridor. These include BPA's Grand Coulee-Bell Nos. 3 and 4 double-circuit 230-kV line, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, a past Avista project adversely affected the historic value of Avista's Little Falls View Line and it is no longer eligible for NRHP listing. As mitigation for the impact, the line was recorded to Historic American Engineering Record standards.

Colville Road is likely eligible for listing in the NRHP. Part of Colville Road near Washtucna is eligible for the NRHP; therefore, other segments are likely to be eligible. Colville Road was used from the 1850s to 1881. In 1881, the Northern Pacific railroad to Spokane Falls (Spokane) made the road obsolete. Colville Road does not appear on a 1912 Spokane County atlas. Other roads were used to serve the growing population in the area at that time. An unchanged portion of this historic road is on the south side of the corridor (near corridor mile 66/8). Also, part of a

transmission line access road matches the alignment of the Colville Road shown on the 1881 General Land Office map.

Remains of two turn-of-the-century farmsteads were found near the corridor. The first site is a scatter of late 19th-early 20th century domestic and farming artifacts from an apparently burned farmstead near a spring. The second site is a late 19th-early 20th century farmstead with an abandoned house, corral, and well/spring house north and outside the proposed project area. Scattered farming implements from the farmstead extend into the project area. Neither site appears eligible for the NRHP.

Another site includes remnants of the foundation of a small building, a dump that contains domestic artifacts, and some log bridge decking. This site does not appear to be eligible for listing in the NRHP.

A large dump dating from before the 1940s was also found. This site's eligibility has not been evaluated.

The two historic sites identified during the 2002 survey include one that was an historic homestead (old structure, soil depression, and a mound). Further evaluation would be needed to determine NRHP eligibility. The other site consists of debris concentrations; it is probably not eligible.

Six previous archaeological investigations were conducted in the vicinity of the Bell Substation. Two historic-period archaeological resources were recorded within a mile radius of the current project area, but no recorded archaeological sites were located in the project APE. The 2002 survey of the substation expansion area and vicinity resulted in the identification of two historic-period cultural resources. One of the resources (a small concentration of metal, glass, and ceramic artifacts) is outside of the APE and would not be impacted by the project. As a result, it does not require additional investigation or treatment as part of the current project. The other (a small concentration of mostly amethyst-tinted glass vessel fragments) seems to be clearly within the APE, and it would be impacted by construction of the substation expansion. Additional field investigation is currently underway to determine the significance of the historic dump site.
No evidence for historical burials was observed in the surveyed area. Moreover, it was observed that existing transmission lines that include the Bell-Addy No. 1 line and the Bell-Trentwood No. 1 and No. 2 lines border that area. Research showed no record of burials having been found during construction of the towers supporting those lines, which are located along the southern portion of the surveyed area. While the research conducted for this project does not preclude there being burials in the substation expansion area, it has demonstrated the lack of historical documentation for such burials. Based on all of the evidence, it seems highly unlikely that burials are located in the project APE.

Unclassified Resources

Two pit sites found during the 1994 survey may have cultural or natural origins. The first site is a single trench-like pit excavated in silty sediments. The site appears to be of historic or recent age and human origin. The second site is at least four pits in rocky, silty sediments around a seasonally wet, closed scabland depression in an area of aspens and ponderosa pines. Three pits are the size range of talus pit depressions or the hole left when a tree falls over. The fourth pit is larger than the others. Cultural value of these sites is unknown.

Environmental Consequences

Transmission line construction and access road widening can damage or destroy cultural resources. Visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that alter the character or setting of a NRHP eligible historic site are forms of disturbance, as are direct physical impacts to site integrity. Increased access to cultural resources due to project construction, operation and maintenance can increase vandalism.

NRHP status of each site that has the potential for eligibility has not been determined at this time. As more information about NRHP status is available, it will be included. Most information about site eligibility will be unavailable until the NRHP process is complete (see Chapter 4, **Heritage Conservation**). Because of the nature of an NRHP listing, if a site is ineligible for inclusion in the NRHP, the project would not affect the site no matter what type of physical or other impact may occur.

In the meantime, to provide information about potential impacts from the project to cultural resources, BPA developed impact ratings. The ratings are based on a site's proximity to the corridor and area of disturbance. The impact ratings do not consider NRHP status.

Impact Definitions

A **high** impact would occur if a site is within an access road widening or a tower site -- either the site of an existing wood pole that would be removed or of a new tower. Direct physical disturbance of the site is certain unless adequate avoidance measures are taken.

A **moderate** impact would occur if a site is within 100 feet of the tower disturbance area or if the site is down slope of an access road or new tower site. Direct physical disturbance is possible.

A **low** impact would occur if the site is outside the high and moderate impact areas or is in a deep, narrow draw or canyon that may be spanned. Direct physical disturbance is highly unlikely. Indirect forms of disturbance could occur.

Impacts

Sites Surveyed in 1994

Thirty-one prehistoric sites, seven historic sites, and two sites of unknown origin were identified. Unless the sites can be avoided by construction activity, potential impacts for Colville Road, twelve talus pits, two pit sites, a dump, and a campsite were rated as high due to their proximity to the corridor. Potential impacts for another nine talus pits were rated as moderate. Potential impacts to the remaining fourteen sites were rated as low.

If Colville Road is eligible for listing in the NRHP, then the project would affect Colville Road because it would probably be disturbed by construction.

Talus pit sites are particularly sensitive because they may contain human burials. These sites should be avoided if possible. If they cannot be avoided and are eligible for NRHP status, appropriate mitigation would be done.

The Grand Coulee-Bell Nos. 3 and 4 double-circuit 230-kV line would not be impacted by the proposed project because, though it is eligible for NRHP, it lies to the north of the proposed line and would not be disturbed by construction.

Several other prehistoric and historic sites are located in the project area but would not be impacted because they are far from areas of potential construction. For sites that become eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, ongoing maintenance of the existing transmission lines may affect the sites.

2002 Surveys

Potential impacts to sites identified during the 2002 survey of the corridor would range from high to low. The historic debris concentration, one of the rock features, and the lithic scatter are within the corridor and proximal to either tower sites or access roads; potential impacts would be high unless the sites can be avoided. Moderate impacts are possible for two of the sites with rock features. Both of these are well outside of the alignment for the 500-kV line but are near the 115-kV line that would be dismantled. Low impacts would be expected for the probable old homestead site (not proximal to a tower site or construction activity) and one of the sites with rock features (outside of the right-of-way).

Of the 31 sites from the 1994 survey that were revisited in 2002, it was thought that only four should require further attention. Many of the previously recorded talus pits appeared to field archaeologists to be of natural origin rather than created as a result of cultural activities. One of the sites was identified as requiring further attention; it consists of numerous rock features atop a series of basalt outcrops. Several existing power line towers are anchored into the basalt outcrops, but do not impact the rock features. The proposed 500-kV line would be constructed

through this outcrop area, and measures would be taken to avoid adversely impacting the features.

The resource within the project APE for the Bell Substation would experience high potential impacts due to construction of the substation expansion. Additional field investigation is in progress to assess the historical importance of that resource.

Traditional Cultural Properties

Traditional cultural properties (TCPs) are places important to tribes in the preservation and continuation of the community's traditional lifestyle. TCPs can be, but are not limited to, religious areas, sacred areas, resource gathering areas (plant, animal, fish, and mineral), places associated with stories and legends, archaeological and ethnographic sites, habitation sites, camp sites, rock art locations, special use sites, trails, and places with Indian names.

Historic, ethnographic and archaeological properties can be TCPs. The Colville Confederated Tribe (CCT) has a long history of cooperative relationships with anthropologists. The CCT actively plays a managerial, administrative, and/or technical role in anthropological studies associated with its constituents, and has for over 70 years. Prehistoric, ethnographic and historic properties must be evaluated for significance in light of their traditional value in conjunction with their scientific value. Archaeological and ethnographic studies are significant because they help preserve and perpetuate traditional knowledge and culture. Studies provide historical and heritage information. Cultural traditions are pertinent to the management of natural and cultural resources.

Four of the recorded archaeological sites were assessed by the CCT to have traditional cultural property values. Three of the four sites are considered to have archaeological significance; i.e., they would likely be eligible for listing on the NRHP. All of the sites are considered to have traditional significance and sacred significance; they are eligible for tribal registry.

These four sites include rock features. Included among these features are small rings of stone and stone cairns. Cairns are small piles of rocks that archaeologists understand may have multiple functions associated with them. It is believed that cairns may be associated with "Vision Quest" sites. Such sites have meaning, value, and cultural function beyond their scientific value.

As a result of the TCP studies for the proposed project, it is recommended that all of these sites should be avoided and that no project-related activities should occur near the sites. Further, for one of sites facing eastward through Grand Coulee and up the Columbia River, it is recommended that the CCT Tribal Historic Preservation Officer be consulted if any of the new towers would intrude on the viewshed east of the site.

Environmental Consequences of the Alternative Action

Constructing double-circuit towers between corridor mile 75/2 and Bell Substation would result in impacts on cultural resources that are essentially the same as for the Proposed Action. Tower locations and access road improvements would be the same for both alternatives.

Cumulative Impacts

The existing transmission lines and access roads have been in the corridor for about 50 years. Since the lines and roads were built, the roads have been used for maintaining the lines and by the private landowner. Some public use of access roads has also occurred on roads where the landowner has not installed a gate to limit access. Some road segments cannot be used because culverts have washed out, or bridges are too decayed for safe vehicular use. This has limited access to the corridor and any cultural sites on or near the corridor. The construction alternatives would improve access to sites and could increase the potential for impact to them, where public access is available. There are no other known projects or activities that are planned that would combine with project impacts to create more substantial cumulative impacts.

Mitigation

Sites would be avoided where practical. Avoidance would include positioning tower sites to span cultural resources or to separate the towers from cultural resources. The existing access road system would be used to the extent possible to reduce the need for new access roads. New access roads would be located to avoid cultural resources. If improvements are needed on existing access roads, such improvements would be limited to the existing roadbed if near a cultural resource site. Dismantling activities for the portion of the Grand Coulee-Bell No. 1 line that would be abandoned in the Grand Coulee area should avoid cultural resource sites that have been identified.

If a site is eligible for NRHP listing and cannot be avoided, mitigation would be carried out. Mitigation would include data recovery (including excavation) and documentation. Other mitigation would be determined in the NRHP process. Mitigation would be designed on a site-by-site basis once all NRHP sites are assessed.

The CCT Tribal Historic Preservation Officer should be consulted if any of the new towers would intrude on the viewshed east of a site in the Grand Coulee area.

Possible mitigation for Colville Road includes photographic and archival documentation, and avoiding the unaltered segment of the Colville Road next to the south side of the project area.

If cultural resources, either archaeological or historical materials, are discovered during construction activities, ground-disturbing activities would be halted in the vicinity of the find and appropriate BPA personnel would be notified immediately by the construction contractor to assure proper handling of the discovery by a qualified archaeologist.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative

Potential impacts associated with the ongoing operations and maintenance activities for the existing transmission line, substations, right-of-way, and accesses roads would continue under the No Action Alternative. No new cultural resource impacts would be expected.