



File Code: 1560, 1950
Date: September 29, 2025

Re: Bonneville Power Administration's F.Y. 2026 Vegetation Management Activities for Chief Joseph-Monroe #1 Transmission Line Corridor, Skykomish Ranger District

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has submitted a Vegetation Management Prescription and Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) for Fiscal Year 2026, within BPA's Chief Joseph-Monroe #1 transmission line corridor through the Skykomish Ranger District in Snohomish and King Counties, Washington. The BPA's planned activities include removing and trimming trees that are too close to power lines, mowing along BPA access roads and towers, and applying herbicides for control of tall-growing vegetation and noxious weeds. The BPA's Chief Joseph-Monroe #1 transmission line corridor is located in the Skykomish River Watershed and crosses portions of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF) along the Highway 2 Corridor. The transmission line corridor is authorized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the BPA and the Forest Service.

The Vegetation Management and Pesticide Use would occur on National Forest System lands in portions of Township 27 N, Range 10 E, Sections 19, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35; T 26 N, R 10 E, S 1, 12; T 26 N, R 11 E, S 7, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27; T 26 N, R 12 E, S 25, 27, 29, 30; T 26 N, R 13 E, S 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32; W.M.

The scope of the BPA's vegetation management prescription involves selective logging or topping (to create wildlife snags) of 177 trees that are at risk of falling on or otherwise affecting a power line and cutting and trimming 765.07 acres of other low vegetation by manual and mechanical means. All proposed work occurring near designated ESA Critical Habitat will be conducted between October 1st, 2025, and the last day in February 2026 to avoid having any impact on Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet breeding season.

The BPA's Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) involves the application of EPA-approved herbicides on 780 acres between Index and Stevens Pass inside the BPA's transmission rights-of-way on National Forest System land. The herbicide treatments are scheduled to begin in October 2025 with a stump application during cutting activities and would continue with a follow-up during the spring and summer months of 2026, ending in September. The treatments on the Chief Joseph-Monroe transmission line corridor reoccur on a three-year rotation with the Schultz-Raver and Olympia-Grand Coulee and Rocky Reach-Maple Valley transmission corridors. Herbicide would be spot sprayed on target vegetation and cut stumps by licensed applicators with backpack sprayers. Tall-growing target vegetation includes sapling-sized broadleaf and coniferous trees, and noxious weeds such as thistle, tansy, and Scotch broom. The Forest Service is assisting the BPA in identifying invasive weed locations for treatment. Streams and wetlands will be avoided and buffered, per the prescription. Please refer to specific details in the attached PUP and vicinity map.

The BPA, in cooperation with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for a Transmission System Vegetation Management



Program in May 2000 (document no. DOE/EIS-0285). The FEIS Record of Decision (ROD) authorized various vegetation management methods to control tall-growing vegetation within BPA's transmission corridors across four northwest states, including mechanical removal and application of pesticides. As part of the 2000 environmental analysis, local Tribes were consulted and public comments were considered. As the FEIS was completed and ROD was approved in 2000, no separate Forest Service decision under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is required to approve or deny this activity. However, the 2000 FEIS does provide for future public notification, and I wanted to notify the public of these planned activities.

Purpose and Need for Project

The purpose of BPA's Vegetation Prescription and PUP is to comply with Western Electricity Coordinating Council standards by working to control tall growing vegetation to maintain safe clearance between the vegetation and high voltage power lines, towers, and roads, and control the infestation and spread of noxious weeds. There is a need for the BPA to maintain its transmission line infrastructure for the purpose of delivering safe and reliable electric power to the Puget Sound metropolitan area. There is also a need for the Forest Service to respond and review BPA's proposed PUP, in accordance with the 2000 FEIS Record of Decision, and a 2017 MOU between the BPA and Forest Service *Regarding Transmission Facilities and Access to Those Facilities on National Forest System Lands*. The 2017 MOU defines the agencies' respective roles in project planning and review of various maintenance activities on transmission facilities and rights of way crossing the National Forests, including access roads, vegetation management, and herbicide application. A key goal of the 2017 MOU is to improve interagency efficiency and effectiveness and avoid duplication of NEPA analysis.

Environmental Review Process

Per direction of the 2017 MOU, the Vegetation Management Prescription and PUP are considered Routine Cycle Vegetation Maintenance activities that were analyzed in a FEIS led by the BPA in May 2000. The Forest Service is a cooperating agency responsible for reviewing the Prescription and PUP with appropriate resource specialists and will provide a written acknowledgement from the Forest Supervisor and/or District Ranger that the activities may proceed, subject to any best management practices or timing of work as needed to protect listed or non-listed species or fulfill other site-specific environmental conditions.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Skykomish Ranger District, Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL SMITH
Skykomish District Ranger



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