

BPA releases final EIS on I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project

The Bonneville Power Administration released its final environmental impact statement on the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project on Feb. 3, 2016, after more than six years of analysis and robust public involvement.

The final EIS is a significant milestone in BPA's National Environmental Policy Act review for the siting of a potential 500-kilovolt transmission line from the Castle Rock, Wash., area to Troutdale, Ore.

The final EIS documents the completed analysis of potential impacts to a wide spectrum of human and natural environments from various potential route alternatives that total more than 300 miles in length. BPA addressed nearly 10,000 comments during the EIS process and worked with landowners and others to obtain input for the analysis.

While the final EIS includes a thorough environmental analysis and identifies a preferred route, the final EIS is not a decision document. It does not include a decision on whether to construct the line.

"Before we make a decision, Bonneville will continue to evaluate the circumstances around the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project to ensure we're making the right investments at the right time," said BPA Administrator Elliot Mainzer, who will ultimately make the decision to build or not.

Mainzer added he does not anticipate reaching a decision before late 2016.

BPA proposed the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project to address a growing transmission congestion problem in southwestern Washington and northwestern Oregon. While there is enough power generation in the region to meet energy demands, the existing transmission lines that deliver the power from other parts of the Northwest are becoming increasingly constrained in their ability to move that power during periods of high electricity use.

As a result of this congestion, the possibility of brownouts or power outages in this area from transmission constraints is increasing. BPA's studies currently show that if electric demand, or load, continues to grow without any additional physical or operational changes, that scenario might occur as early as 2021.

In addition to considering whether to build the proposed line, for the past several years BPA has been actively exploring possible "non-wire" solutions — measures that do not involve building a new transmission line — that may address the congestion issue as part of its mission to deliver power reliably and at low cost to the Northwest.

BPA has identified some solutions that could defer the project until 2021. However, to date, BPA has been unable to identify any combination of non-wire measures that would address congestion and maintain transmission reliability in this corridor for a longer term and that would be operationally, commercially and economically feasible.

Even so, non-wire technologies are continuously evolving, and BPA has assembled a team of highly skilled engineers and other subject matter experts to continue exploring whether these measures and their ability to meet reliability needs, in the short or long term — or indefinitely, if possible. Some of those non-wire solutions include generation redispatch, demand response, distributed standby generation, other distributed energy resources and energy efficiency.

Jeff Cook, BPA's vice president of Transmission Planning and Asset Management, emphasized that it is unlikely a single solution exists among the non-wire approaches.

In the meantime, Mainzer will continue to review the merits of the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project along with any emerging information on non-wire solutions.

"This line would provide a long-term transmission solution, and so far, we haven't found any other feasible and cost-effective options," said Mainzer. "We recognize the impact and uncertainty that this potential line has on the affected communities in the I-5 corridor. But I want to be sure every potentially feasible option has been explored before I make a decision of this size and scope."

For more information on the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project, visit www.bpa.gov/goto/15.



BPA COO Claudia Andrews announces retirement



Chief Operating Officer Claudia Andrews announced that she will retire from the Bonneville Power Administration on Sept. 30, 2016.

Andrews, who was appointed chief operating officer in February 2014, is responsible for Power Services; Transmission Services; Environment, Fish and Wildlife; Customer Support Services and Information Technology.

"I am deeply appreciative of Claudia's talent and leadership on so many levels — from the managerial courage she

displays as we navigate BPA through tough issues at the core of our highly complex business, to her thoughtful and caring approach in interacting with our workforce," said BPA Administrator Elliot Mainzer. "She will be missed."

Before serving as chief operating officer, Andrews was BPA's executive vice president and chief financial officer, overseeing capital and debt management, accounting, cash management and budgeting. Between 2006 and 2012, she served as BPA's treasurer, acting chief risk officer and acting chief financial officer. Previously, she held a variety of management and staff positions in the Finance, Power Services and Supply Chain organizations. She has worked at BPA since 1990.

"Culminating my career at BPA as chief operating officer has provided me with an even greater opportunity to work with — and appreciate — the tremendously gifted and dedicated people at BPA," Andrews said. "I am very proud of the things we have accomplished during our time together."

Westview High School wins BPA Regional Science Bowl



The winning Westview High School Team 1 sported BPA Science Bowl shirts from the past five events.

Three-time champion Westview High School Team 1 of Beaverton, Ore., proved unstoppable Feb. 6, 2016, in the Bonneville Power Administration Regional Science Bowl at the University of Portland. In the 25th anniversary event, Westview overcame a strong challenge from second-place finisher Lincoln High School of Portland. Catlin Gabel School Team 1 of Portland finished third.

The nation's largest regional science bowl highlighted the intellectual and competitive energy of more than 250 high school students vying for an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to compete in the Department of Energy's National Science Bowl from April 28 to May 2.

The middle school competition was held the previous weekend with Evergreen Junior High Team 1 of Redmond, Wash., taking the top spot. Shahala Middle School Team 1 of Vancouver, Wash., came in a close second with Stoller

Middle School and Meadow Park Middle School, both of Beaverton, rounding out the top 4.

Beyond the prestige of winning and the prospect of the national competition, BPA and science bowl volunteers have worked to establish partnerships with universities and colleges in the region to offer scholarships for the top three teams in the high school division. In all, 17 colleges and universities in the Northwest offered members of the top teams a chance at more than \$300,000 in scholarships.

"Bonneville has sponsored the Science Bowl each year for a quarter century to support these incredible students in their love of math and science," said BPA Chief Operating Officer Claudia Andrews. "As I watched them compete today, I was amazed and inspired by these kids. They are the energy innovators of the future, and we hope today's experience provides another step toward that important goal."

BPA sponsors the science bowl to showcase students' talents in science, technology, engineering and math, as well as to encourage them to consider careers in these fields. This helps to build the future labor pool of scientists and innovators so critical to the energy industry. The BPA Regional Science Bowl is sponsored by the University of Portland, Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories and Vernier Software & Technology.

Public Involvement [Updates & Notices]

BPA PROJECTS

Focus 2028 [Regionwide]

BPA hosted a round of Focus 2028 discussions in February 2016 after accepting comments about future discussion topics through Dec. 9, 2015. Sessions included an executive panel; an overview of cost management practices; managing for financial health; long-term approach to federal hydropower system stewardship; performance-based environmental stewardship; optimizing BPA's energy efficiency program design; and finding balance in transmission business and builds. www.bpa.gov/goto/Focus2028

Power

Alcoa remand public process [Regionwide]

BPA accepted public input and comment to assist in its response to the decision issued Sept. 18, 2014, by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The ruling in Industrial Customers of Northwest Utilities, et al. v. Bonneville Power Administration, which is related to BPA's contracts with its direct-service industry customers. In its decision, the court instructed BPA to address four specific questions regarding service to Alcoa and the recovery of funds. BPA issued a draft record of decision on Sept. 4, 2015, accepted comments through Oct. 9, 2015, and issued a final record of decision on Jan. 21, 2016. www.bpa.gov/power/pl/regionaldialogue/implementation/Documents/DSI.SHTML

Cost verification for fiscal year 2015 Slice true-up adjustment charge [Regionwide]

During BPA's second comment period for the cost verification process, which closed on Jan. 5, the Slice customer group elaborated on previously submitted comments. BPA staff provided a response in February. The fiscal year 2015 composite cost pool savings, when compared to the rate case forecast, are \$144.7 million. As a result, the fiscal year 2015 Slice true-up adjustment that is applicable to Slice customers is a credit of \$40.4 million. BPA is finalizing the remainder of the schedule now. www.bpa.gov/goto/costverification

Proposed momentum savings baseline alignment library [Regionwide]

BPA is seeking feedback on its proposal to scope and implement a baseline alignment library, which would provide an optional resource for utilities that conduct conservation potential assessments. Without alignment on baselines, BPA cannot accurately report "momentum" savings to utilities. Baseline alignment also affects Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance and program savings. BPA sought feedback on the proposal and approach through Jan. 27, 2016. Comments will be considered as BPA makes a final decision, and the agency will respond to them in a letter to the region. www.bpa.gov/goto/BaselineLibrary

Transmission

Kalispell-Kerr Transmission Line Rebuild Project [Kalispell and Polson, Mont.]

BPA proposes to rebuild the 41-mile Kalispell-Kerr 115-kilovolt wood-pole transmission line between the cities of Kalispell and Polson, Mont. The project is necessary due to the overall age and condition of the line. BPA intends to rebuild the lines with the same general structure locations and similar pole heights, except where changes would be needed to conform to safety standards. Improvements would include

replacing all wood pole structures (including poles, cross arms, cross braces, guys, anchors and insulator assemblies); replacing conductors and ground wires; and improving access roads. BPA released the draft environmental assessment in February 2016. If BPA decides to proceed with the project, construction would begin in the summer of 2017. www.bpa.gov/goto/KalispellKerr

Midway-Moxee Rebuild and Midway-Grandview Upgrade Transmission Line Project [Benton and Yakima counties, Wash.]

BPA expects to release a final environmental assessment in March 2016 and a decision concerning whether to rebuild the two transmission lines and upgrade the Midway-Grandview transmission line. The final environmental assessment addresses comments received on the draft environmental assessment. If BPA decides to rebuild and upgrade the lines, construction would begin in September or October of 2016. The Bureau of Land Management is a cooperating agency with BPA for the environmental assessment. www.bpa.gov/goto/MidMoxGrand

Hills Creek-Lookout Point Transmission Line Rebuild Project [Lane County, Ore.]

BPA proposes to rebuild the 26-mile Hills Creek-Lookout Point 115-kV wood-pole transmission line between the cities of Oakridge and Lowell, Ore. Improvements would involve replacing all wood-pole structures (including poles and other hardware); replacing conductors and ground wires; realigning the transmission line to avoid a rock fall and landslide; and improving access roads. BPA expects to publish the draft environmental assessment for comment in March 2016. The U.S. Forest Service is a cooperating agency with BPA for the EA. If BPA decides to proceed with the project, construction would begin in the summer of 2018. www.bpa.gov/goto/hillscreekllookoutpoint

I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project [Cowlitz, Clark counties, Wash.; Multnomah County, Ore.]

BPA released a final environmental impact statement on Feb. 3, 2016. The final EIS does not represent or include a decision concerning whether to build the proposed I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project. Before BPA makes any such decision, it is further reviewing the cost and rate implications of the project. BPA is also continuing to explore potential options that would not involve building the line — referred to as non-wire measures — to see if there are any feasible and cost-effective options that could defer the need for the project, either in the long term or indefinitely. BPA expects to make a decision about the project by the end of 2016. If it decides to build, BPA would then focus on negotiating acquisition of the required easements from property owners and obtaining permits. www.bpa.gov/goto/i5

Lane-Wendson Transmission Line Rebuild Project [Lane County, Ore.]

BPA proposes to rebuild the 41.3-mile Lane-Wendson No. 1 115-kV wood-pole transmission line between Eugene and Florence, Ore. The project is necessary due to the age and condition of the line. BPA's intent is to rebuild the lines using the same general structure locations and similar pole heights, except where changes may be needed to conform with safety standards. Improvements would involve replacing all wood-pole structures (including poles, cross arms, cross braces, guys, anchors and insulator assemblies); replacing conductors and ground wires; replacing five disconnect switches; and improving access roads. BPA accepted comments through Jan. 4, 2016. If BPA decides to proceed with the project, construction would begin in the summer of 2016. http://efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Lane-Wendson/

Public Involvement continued [Updates & Notices]

Environment, Fish and Wildlife

Steigerwald Floodplain Restoration Project [Clark County, Wash.]

BPA is proposing to fund the Steigerwald Floodplain Restoration Project, proposed by the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership and the Port of Camas-Washougal, located on the Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge in Clark County, Wash. The project, which would reconnect Gibbons Creek to the Columbia River, is intended to improve water quality and habitat to benefit steelhead and cutthroat trout; chinook, coho and chum salmon; and Pacific and Western brook lamprey. BPA initiated scoping in December and the scoping period closed on Jan. 27, 2016. BPA hosted a public meeting in Washougal, Wash., on Jan. 14, 2016. BPA plans to develop a draft EIS by fall 2016. www.bpa.gov/goto/SteigerwaldFloodplain

Bird Track Springs Restoration Project [Union County, Ore.]

BPA is proposing to fund the Birdtrack Springs Restoration Project, located within the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and adjacent to private lands in the upper Grande Ronde River, Ore. The project is a partnership between BPA, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Reclamation. The project will benefit Endangered Species Act-listed Pacific salmonids and their habitat by excavating channel meanders, removing artificial constraints, increasing off-channel connectivity and increasing instream complexity through placement of large wood structures. Initial project scoping began in February 2016.

Kerry Island Restoration Project [Columbia County, Ore.]

BPA is proposing to fund the Kerry Island Restoration Project, proposed by the Columbia Land Trust and located along Westport Slough about a mile east of the town of Westport, Ore. The project would benefit Endangered Species Act-listed Pacific salmonids and their habitat by removing a levee surrounding the island, restoring a tidal channel network and restoring tidal wetlands and floodplain connectivity. Initial project scoping began in late February 2016.

Lower Elochoman Restoration Project [Wahkiakum County, Wash.]

BPA is proposing to fund the Lower Elochoman Restoration Project, proposed by the Columbia Land Trust and located along the Lower Elochoman River about two miles north of the town of Cathlamet, Wash. The project would benefit Endangered Species Act-listed Pacific salmonids and their habitat by removing a levee along the Lower Elochoman River and restoring wetlands and floodplain connectivity. Initial project scoping began in late February 2016.

Wallacut River Confluence Restoration Project [Pacific County, Wash.]

BPA is proposing to fund the Wallacut River Confluence Restoration Project, proposed by the Columbia Land Trust, along the Wallacut River at its confluence with the Columbia River about 1.5 miles northeast of the town of Ilwaco, Wash. The project would benefit Endangered Species Act-listed Pacific salmonids and their habitat by removing a levee along the Wallacut River, restoring a tidal channel network, and

restoring tidal wetlands and floodplain connectivity. Initial project scoping began in late February 2016.

Middle Entiat River Restoration Project [Chelan County, Wash.]

BPA is proposing to provide funding for the Middle Entiat River Habitat Restoration Project, a river restoration and habitat improvement project along a 4-mile section of the Entiat River, in Chelan County, Wash. The goal of the proposed project is to re-establish natural riverine processes and a properly functioning and self-sustaining riverine floodplain ecosystem that would provide critical spawning, rearing and off-channel refuge habitat for native fish and floodplain-associated wildlife in the Entiat River Basin for steelhead, bull trout and other resident fish. Scoping was initiated on Feb. 1, 2016, and comments will be accepted until March 1, 2016. www.bpa.gov/goto/MiddleEntiat

Eightmile Ranch Coho Acclimation Site [Okanogan County, Wash.]

BPA and the U.S. Forest Service plan to release the final environmental assessment for the Eightmile Ranch Coho Acclimation Site early this year. The Forest Service plans to release its draft decision notice for the project at the same time. Release of these documents will begin a 45 day public objection period. Tentatively, the Forest Service plans to issue its final decision notice and special-use permit, if warranted, in early to mid-2016. BPA plans to release its finding of no significant impact, or FONSI, if warranted, within one to two weeks after the Forest Service issues the special-use permit. www.bpa.gov/goto/Eightmile

CLOSE OF COMMENT

- **Mar. 1**, Kalispell-Kerr (EA) Transmission Line Rebuild Project
- **Mar. 2**, Middle Entiat River Restoration Project

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For current meeting information, go to www.bpa.gov/PublicInvolvement/Cal.

Financial Reserves Policy Workshop

- **Mar. 29**, 9 a.m. to noon
BPA rates hearing room, 1201 Lloyd Blvd., Suite 200, Portland, Ore.

BP-18 Generation Inputs Workshop

- **Mar. 29**, 1 to 4 p.m.
BPA rates hearing room, 1201 Lloyd Blvd., Suite 200, Portland, Ore.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Information on other projects under environmental review is available at www.bpa.gov/goto/NEPA.

For information about the National Environmental Policy Act in general, go to www.bpa.gov/goto/environmentalplanning.

The Journal is a monthly publication of the Bonneville Power Administration. If you have questions or comments, or you want to be added to the mailing list for any project, call toll free 800-622-4519.

To order copies of documents, call: 800-622-4520 or 503-230-7334. Written comments may be sent to: BPA, P.O. Box 14428, Portland, OR 97293-4428. Email address: comment@bpa.gov. BPA home page: www.bpa.gov. For details on BPA environmental reviews listed above, including site maps and documents issued to date, see www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/nepadocs.aspx. Process Abbreviations: EA-Environmental Assessment, EIS-Environmental Impact Statement, ESA-Endangered Species Act, FONSI-Finding of No Significant Impact, NOI-Notice of Intent, ROD-Record of Decision.

