RECORD OF DECISION

FOR THE
BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
GARRISON-SPOKANE 500-kV TRANSMISSION PROJECT

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The USDOE Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposed to build a 500-kV transmission line from Garrison, Montana, to Spokane, Washington. The USDA Forest Service (FS) and the USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed to grant right-of-way across their respective public lands for that transmission project. This is the record of the Federal agencies' decisions on those actions.

The need for Colstrip power was decided in July 1976, when the State of Montana granted a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for Colstrip Generating Units 3 and 4. That need is not a subject of this Record of Decision.

In a Record of Decision for the crossing of Federal lands, dated September 21, 1979, the BLM and the Forest Service jointly approved a two-mile-wide transmission line corridor from Colstrip, Montana, to Hot Springs, Montana. Bonneville Power Administration concurred with this decision, stating that it would build a double-circuit 500-kV transmission line in the designated corridor. The line would start at the interconnection, near Townsend, with the facilities built by Montana Power Company; it would extend to a new 500-kV substation in the vicinity of Garrison, Montana, and continue on BPA's existing vacant right-of way through the Clark Fork Valley to the Missoula area. From there, it would go on to interconnect with the existing Federal grid, either by continuing along the existing corridor to the present Hot Springs Substation, or by proceeding along a new corridor to a new substation near Plains, Montana.

In response to public concerns, including those of the State of Montana, deviations from the designated corridor in the Boulder and Deer Lodge area were evaluated in an EIS Supplement prepared cooperatively by BLM, FS, and BPA, with BLM as lead agency. The Record of Decision adopting alternative locations between Townsend and Garrison, Montana, was then issued on August 18, 1981.

Also at that time, BPA studies identified a new potential route between Garrison Substation and a substation that could be built near Taft, Montana. The Washington Water Power Company also identified new increasing needs for transmission reinforcement in north Idaho. These technical factors, plus public concerns over developing a line in the federally approved corridor in the Clark Fork Valley, prompted BPA to consider other routing alternatives between Garrison Substation and the main grid of the Federal Columbia River Power System.

Together, the BPA, FS, and BLM completed a route study and both draft and final EIS's for a 500-kV transmission line between Garrison Substation and Bell Substation near Spokane, Washington 1/. The State of Montana also participated in the study process by conducting an independent, parallel review of the project and by working cooperatively to develop mitigation and monitoring plans.

The draft EIS, issued in March 1982, was followed by the final EIS, filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on March 15, 1983. The draft EIS identified the Taft Plan and, in particular, the Taft South Route as the alternative of least environmental impact. The final EIS also concluded that the Taft Plan had the least environmental impact and that it was preferred. Also included in each EIS was an evaluation of the reinforcing of the Washington Water Power transmission system in north Idaho. A separate Record of Decision is being prepared for this independent action.

2.0 AGENCY

USDOE Bonneville Power Administration; USDA Forest Service; USDI Bureau of Land Management.

3.0 DECISION SUMMARY

The Federal agencies have selected the Taft South Route for the Garrison-Spokane Project. This route selection modifies the 1979 corridor decision with respect to transmission line location from Garrison west.

The Federal agencies have adopted the mitigation measures listed in the final Garrison-Spokane 500-kV Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as "Part of the Proposal." Also included as mitigation for the Taft South route are the following: realining the route south of Maxville (generally following the "AB" routing); adjusting the crossing at Rock Creek about 1300 feet to the north and lowering the conductor wire sag; and determining tower type, placement, and spacing, in consultation with local residents of the Miller Creek area. The State of Montana is continuing to study the Rock Creek and Miller Creek crossings. Their findings will be considered and may be adopted as part of the site-specific measures in the cooperative Federal-State project mitigation/monitoring plan, in the BPA-FS Project Plan, and in project construction specifications. It is the intent of the Federal agencies to prepare a mitigation plan jointly with the State of Montana within a 45-day period following the signing of this Record of Decision. Additional mitigation measures are also prescribed for Maxville, Rock Creek, and Miller Creek, as well as for the St. Regis, Lookout Pass/ Mullan, Hayden Creek, and Rathdrum/Pleasant Prairie areas. These will reflect a cooperative interagency effort and will be completed after this Record of Decision. General mitigation measures adopted are summarized under Part 4.2 below.

1/ In this study, the "routes" meant tentative line locations within a broader corridor, impacts were evaluated along these routes.

The FS and BLM have decided to issue right-of-way permits authorizing the project where it crosses Federal lands.

BPA will proceed with land and right-of-way acquisition, construction, and subsequent operation and maintenance of the proposed facilities on the Taft South route.

4.0 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

4.1 Alternatives and Decision Rationale

Within the framework of three electrical plans-of-service (the Hot Springs, Plains, and Taft Plans), numerous route alternatives were considered. The alternative of No Action was also considered. The decisions were based on the factors of purpose and need, environmental effects, cost considerations, engineering performance, and public concerns.

The alternatives are presented below in order of preference.

Alternative C -- Taft Plan (Selected Alternative): On the Taft South route, a 500-kV double-circuit line proceeds southwest from Garrison Substation, across the Flint Creek Valley near Maxville, then northwest across the Sapphire Mountains south of Missoula. It crosses the Bitterroot and Clark Fork Rivers, then heads west near St. Regis to a new 10-acre substation at Taft. The double-circuit portion of the route is 157 miles long. A single-circuit 500-kV line leaves Taft Substation, and enters Idaho near Mullan. It continues through the Coeur d'Alene Mountains, then emerges onto Rathdrum Prairie near Coeur d'Alene, where it joins an existing corridor and continues into Bell Substation at Spokane. The single-circuit portion is 101 miles long. Additional terminal equipment will be installed at Garrison and Bell Substations. The overall cost of this plan is $244 million. This is the environmentally preferred route location.

In selecting the Taft Plan, the agencies considered tradeoffs among the factors discussed below. Review documents used in making this decision included: the Garrison-Spokane 500-kV Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement (Draft and Final) (available from the BPA Transmission Coordination Office, 1620 Regent, P.O. Box 4327, Missoula, MT., 59806); the Montana State DNRC draft and final reports on Preferred and Alternate Routes: BPA 500-Kilovolt Line From Garrison-West (available from DNRC Offices, 32 S. Ewing, Helena, MT., 59620); and the Montana Board of Natural Resources and Conservation recommendations (May 6, 1983). Based on a series of route comparisons made by an interagency, interdisciplinary team (BPA, FS, BLM, Montana DNRC), the agencies decided that the lesser effects of the Taft Plan, particularly on the people-related resources emphasized during public review, outweighed its relative disadvantages in terms of higher cost and greater effects on certain natural resources.

Taft South route: This route was selected as the best overall route location. The decision factors considered were:

.Overall, this route would minimize environmental impact 2/. The Taft South route would have the least impact on social and economic resources, developed land, future residential development, agriculture, recreation, and visual resources. Although effects on certain natural systems would be higher, the interagency team analysis concluded that these effects generally could be more readily reduced or avoided by mitigation than could social or land use impacts.

.The overriding public concern about the effects of transmission lines was to avoid impacts on people and people-related concerns. The Taft South route best meets this concern.

.The Taft South route encounters about the same number of environmentally sensitive areas as do the other plans. The Taft South route offers more opportunities to avoid or mitigate effects in such areas than the other plans do. The major sensitive areas encountered by this route are Maxville, Rock Creek, Miller Creek, St. Regis, Lookout Pass/Mullan, Hayden Creek, and Rathdrum/Pleasant Prairie.

.Along the Taft South route, mitigation strategies and alternatives were examined at each of these sensitive areas. Measures adopted to reduce or avoid adverse effects are listed in Part 4.2. Because of the complexity of issues involved, the decision factors for Maxville, Rock Creek, and Miller Creek are discussed below.

Maxville: The Federal agencies and the State of Montana have continued to work with local residents to mitigate those impacts of the proposed route (called route "A") related to social concerns and proximity to people. Numerous route variations between the original proposed route and an area three miles south of Maxville were examined. These were narrowed down to two principal route adjustments: one just north of Maxville (called "AA") and another, and its variation, well to the south (called "AB" and "AB Modified"). A route was selected which generally follows the AB option south of Maxville (and including a site-specific adjustment near Boulder Creek) until it crosses Highway 10A; from the highway west, the route will proceed north and west to rejoin the original route as soon as is practicable. This adjustment reduces social effects and is located farther from developed land uses. The exact location of this adjustment will be worked out to minimize access road construction while still avoiding proximity to residences.

Rock Creek: In response to Montana State Aeronautics Division concerns about foul weather aviation hazards from the proposed line crossing, several alternate crossings were examined between the mouth of Rock Creek and a point several miles up the valley. A proposal to adjust the original crossing about 1300

2/ The term "environment" has been used in the project analysis to include its natural, physical, social, and economic aspects, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) under 40 CFR Part 1508.14.

feet north and lower the sag of the conductor wires was adopted because it meets the aeronautical requirements; minimizes land use, soils, water, and fisheries effects; and provides the least visually intrusive option available through the most heavily used part of the drainage. No other alternative meets all these criteria.

Miller Creek: A number of routing variations have been examined. The selected routing is south of Miller Creek along the base of a broad hill. Because of expressed public concern and the potential for high visual impact, tower designs and placement, as well as their spacing, will be coordinated with area residents.

.From a technical standpoint, the Taft Plan would reliably integrate electric power supplied by the Colstrip generating units in eastern Montana. Constructing transmission facilities for this plan would allow the Bonneville Power Administration to provide necessary reinforcement to the interconnected regional power system.

.This alternative would have the highest total cost, about $20 million more than the lowest-cost Hot Springs Plan.

Taft North route: This route was the second-best overall route location. It follows a more northerly course along the Clark Fork River between Garrison Substation and Missoula. This alternative offers a lower-impact option for forestry and for cultural and aquatic resources, but would affect more residences and recreational viewers. It is close to the Taft South route in overall impact. It was not selected because of the emphasis in the project area on avoiding impacts on people and because the impacts would be more difficult to mitigate.

Alternative B -- Plains Plan: A 500-kV double-circuit line would extend west from Garrison Substation to a new 12-acre substation near Plains, Montana, where these circuits would intersect with existing lines. From there, a 500-kV single-circuit line would be built to Bell Substation. The double-circuit portion is about 153 miles long, and the single-circuit portion is about 111 miles long, for a total of 264 miles. Terminal equipment would be added at Garrison and Bell Substations. Overall cost would be $229 million.

The Plains Plan was the second-best plan. The primary reason for not selecting this plan was that it would affect a greater number of people and offer fewer options for mitigation, particularly in major environmentally sensitive areas. Also, the relatively more severe impacts on people are not offset by substantially lower effects on other resources.

Alternative A -- Hot Springs Plan: A 500-kV double-circuit transmission line would extend from Garrison Substation to Hot Springs Substation and beyond through the Clark Fork Valley to Thompson Falls, a total distance of 157 miles. From Thompson Falls to Bell Substation, 111 miles would be designed for single-circuit construction. The line would be 268 miles long altogether. Substation terminal equipment would be added at Garrison, Hot Springs, and Bell Substations. Estimated overall cost is $225 million.

The Hot Springs Plan was the least-preferred alternative. Even the best route for this plan would create more social, land-use, and other people-related effects than routes of the other plans. The impacts would be slightly counterbalanced by lesser effects on natural resources.

No Action Alternative: Under the No Action alternative, the Colstrip transmission system would be built to Garrison Substation, but the regional transmission system would not be reinforced, and 500-kV transmission facilities would not be built from Garrison west.

The No Action alternative was not selected because it does not meet the purposes and needs to which BPA is responding: that is, to integrate and transmit additional electric power from the Colstrip generating units and to reinforce the regional power system to insure adequate electrical reliability and electrical stability.

4.2 Mitigation

Many environmental considerations that have been applied in siting the line can be termed best resource management practices. These considerations are an integral part of the siting and mitigation process. However, they are not repeated here as mitigation measures. Only those actions necessary to reduce residual impacts that cannot otherwise be avoided are included.

The following means of mitigating environmental impacts of the project are adopted. The involved Federal and State agencies are jointly identifying site-specific mitigation measures to incorporate into the cooperative mitigation plan and the Project Plan. Adopting these mitigation measures insures that all practicable means have been used to protect the environment from harm; it also insures that the agencies will follow their respective mandates for land management as set forth in law, regulation, and policy.

General Measures Adopted

Certain mitigation measures listed in the final EIS are standard BPA, FS, and BLM policy. These policies address such things as interference to radio, television, and communication facilities and by audible noise; weed control; restoration and compensation for damage in agricultural areas; protection of wildlife habitat and hunting opportunity; herbicide use; erosion control at stream crossings; protection of cultural resources (procedures for which are also spelled out in 36 CFR 800 and in standard construction specifications); planning for access roads; and coordination of clearing.

Other measures listed in the final EIS are part of BPA's standard construction specifications (Part 1, Chapter 4; part 2, Chapters 2 and 3; and part 3, Chapter 1). Those measures covered by standard specifications involve burning of debris; dust control; construction shutdowns to prevent excessive erosion; and cultural resource protection.

Other general measures adopted are to: minimize right-of-way clearing consistent with safe, reliable operation of the line; control access road development; control soil erosion and sedimentation; coordinate both clearing and tower and road locations; schedule construction as necessary to avoid sensitive wildlife habitat and poor soil conditions; otherwise reduce or avoid effects on wildlife or their habitat and impacts on hunting opportunity; avoid effects on honeybees; reduce visual intrusion; and reduce disturbance of desirable vegetation.

Other measures considered in the final EIS and adopted are:

.In areas where WWP and BPA construction are parallel, the tower design, spacing, right-of-way clearing, and access road requirements of the two lines will be coordinated to reduce potential impacts.

.Where the right-of-way is near areas with potential for future residential development, BPA will work with city/county planning agencies to establish local policies for reducing future land use conflicts along the right-of-way, especially those that would preclude parallel construction of future lines within existing right-of-way.

.BPA will work with landowners to maintain and repair cattle guards, fences, and gates affected by BPA maintenance activity on access roads.

.Before the start of construction (at least 30 days if possible), BPA representatives and the construction contractor will meet with officials of affected communities and with local business representatives to discuss the size and timing of predicted temporary increases in population, provisions for housing workers, and possible demands on local services. This action is intended to reduce community concerns about construction period impacts and to allow time to prepare for stresses on local services.

Measures Adopted in Specific Areas

This discussion details resources that could be affected and measures adopted to reduce those effects for certain sensitive areas. Similar measures will be used in other areas as required. The cooperative Federal/State effort on centerline mitigation and monitoring has been established and will continue. This effort is focusing on: identifying additional sites which require specific mitigation (such as managing road closures or reducing amounts of access); adjusting centerline, tower, or access road locations to effect mitigation; and planning monitoring programs to determine the effectiveness of the measures.

-Maxville / Flint Creek, Montana

Potential Effects

.Proximity to people and developed residential lands;
.Interference with agricultural practices; loss of agricultural production; proximity to livestock;
.Visual intrusion on residents and travelers on Highway 10-A and on scenic landscape;
.Reduction of big game (elk) habitat security.

Adopted Mitigation

.Select routing south of Maxville (generally "AB") to reduce concerns for social and land use impact;
.Closely coordinate centerline and tower locations with local residents to avoid residential, agricultural, and grazing land;
.Minimize clearing/top trees as necessary at highway crossing to reduce visual effects;
.Institute a road use management program to reduce effects on big game;
.Use nonspecular conductor wires and darkened towers to reduce visual effects.

-Rock Creek, Montana

Potential Effects

.Conflicts with recreational use of nationally renowned fishing stream and developed recreation sites;
.Disturbance of prime fishery resources and bald eagle habitat;
.Disturbance of sideslopes sensitive to scarring, erosion/sedimentation;
.Conflict with emergency foul-weather flyway.

Adopted Mitigation

.Limit clearing and/or top trees on valley bottom or on lower or middle slopes to reduce effects on recreational, fish, wildlife, and soils resources;
.No access road construction on valley bottom or lower slopes to reduce effects on those resources;
.Locate towers high on the side slopes to reduce effects on those resources;
.Darken towers and use nonspecular conductor wires to reduce visual effects;
.Use long span; use special conductor wire sag to reduce visual effects of cleared right-of-way;
.Use marker balls and no overhead groundwires to reduce flyway conflict 3/;
.Assist Montana State Aeronautics Division in updating state aeronautic charts to show the transmission line location.

-Lolo / Miller Creek / Blue Mountain, Montana

Potential Effects

.Proximity to people and established and proposed residential subdivisions;
.Visual effects on highway travelers and developed areas;
.Disturbance of unstable soils;
.Disturbance of fishery resources and bald eagle habitat.

Adopted Mitigation

.Adjust location near Cahoot Creek and Deadman Gulch to avoid residential areas and to reduce visual effects;
.Use tubular steel towers or darkened lattice towers and use nonspecular

3/ Measures to reduce visual intrusion and those to avoid airway hazards may be in direct conflict.

conductor wires to reduce visual effects;
.Selectively clear; minimize access road construction and overall ground disturbance to reduce visual effects and disturbance of wildlife and fisheries habitat and of soil;
.Avoid undercutting steep slopes to minimize soils disturbance;
.Top trees at river and highway crossings to reduce visual effects;
.Raise tower heights near Deadman Gulch to reduce clearing to reduce visual effects.

-St. Regis, Montana

Potential Effects
.Proximity to people, towns, and undeveloped subdivisions;
.Intrusion on major planned community park;
.Soil and vegetation disturbance on steep slopes, particularly at Clark Fork River Crossing;
.Visual effects on Highway 461 travelers.

Adopted Mitigation
.Select the Tamarack Creek alternative alignment to avoid developed areas and a planned park;
.Reduce clearing and road construction at the Clark Fork River crossing;
.Use nonspecular conductor wires and darkened towers to reduce visual effects.

-Lookout Pass, Montana / Mullan, Idaho

Potential Effects
.Visual intrusion at Lookout Pass and recreation sites and to travelers on I-90;
.Visual degradation of highly scenic landscape;
.Taft Substation site (effects on water resources, soils).

Adopted Mitigation
.Clear selectively to reduce visual effects;
.Use darkened towers or improved appearance towers and use nonspecular conductor to reduce visual effects;
.Adjust Taft Substation site location and design; reconfigure access road system to avoid effects on water resources and soils;
.Use special erosion control measures on Taft Substation road system to avoid effects on water resources, fisheries habitat, and soils.

-Hayden Creek, Idaho

Potential Effects
.Conflicts with use of general recreation area and intensive recreation use sites;
.Disturbance of fishery resources;
.Intrusion on prehistoric camps;
.Conflict with forest management plans;
.Potential to compound existing erosion and water quality problems;
.Visual effects on residents and Highway 95 travelers.

Adopted Mitigation

.Adjust location out of Hayden Creek drainage to avoid all the above problems;
.Use darkened or tubular steel towers and nonspecular conductor wires to reduce visual effects;
.Reduce clearing; top trees (as necessary) in vicinity of Highway 95 crossing to minimize visual effects.

-Rathdrum Prairie / Pleasant Prairie, Idaho-Washington

Potential Effects

.Proximity of transmission right-of-way to developed and developing areas;
.Conflict with agricultural land;
.Intrusion on upland sandpiper habitat.

Adopted Mitigation

.Use nonspecular conductor and treated towers to reduce visual effects on developed areas;
.Place towers to minimize disturbance to farming practices;
.Coordinate timing of construction to avoid disturbance of upland sandpiper habitat;
.Limit numbers of towers; do not build permanent access through upland sandpiper habitat.

Mitigation Not Adopted

The following measures, listed in the final EIS as "Not Included in the Proposal," have not been adopted:

.Helicopter Construction: Construction of parts of the BPA 500-kV transmission line solely by helicopter has not been adopted because the weight of the tower structures exceeds helicopter lifting capacity, particularly at the moderately high (4000-6000+ feet) elevations along the route. Certain phases of construction--such as stringing of sock lines--may be done by helicopter.

.Underground Construction: Undergrounding of any portion of the transmission line has not been adopted because the following factors heavily outweigh potential mitigation results (which would principally be used to reduce visual impact): uncertain reliability due to present technological limitations; the risk of a prolonged outage of a major transmission intertie; the significantly increased cost; geologic instability; the risk of negatively affecting streambed hydraulics; the risk of cable damage, resulting in oil spill pollution; possible tradeoffs for impacts on other resources such as residential and agricultural land uses. In summary, the agencies concluded that it is not reasonable to incur the added cost of underground transmission systems in the face of the uncertainty whether systems would meet reliability criteria or would alleviate impacts as intended.

4.3 Monitoring and Enforcement

The involved agencies will insure that mitigation measures identified in the final EIS, and adopted in this Record of Decision, are included in the construction contract specifications. The Federal Land Mananagement agencies will assign project coordinators and field representatives to work with BPA construction coordinators and field representatives on Federal lands. The BPA inspectors who monitor the project will be responsible for insuring that the measures agreed to in this Record of Decision and subsequent Project Plan, right-of-way permit, and BPA construction contract specifications are carried out. BPA will work with the affected States to establish and enforce mitigation measures on State and private lands. The monthly report from the BPA Division of Construction will identify mitigation measures that have been initiated and/or completed as specified in the project contract.

A designated archeologist will be present when digging is being done at cultural sites identified in the contract specifications, at the request of the appropriate land managing agency. The construction contractor will notify BPA one week before beginning work in these areas.

4.4 Integration With Other Requirements

-The Taft South route crosses portions of five Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) II inventory areas in Montana (Nos. 424, 790, 791, 795, and 800) and one in Idaho (No. 139). All six of these areas were designated as "nonwilderness" in the Forest Service's RARE II process. As a result of a recent decision by the Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit regarding the status of RARE II areas in California [California v. Block, 690 F.2d 753 (9th Cir. 1982)], the Forest Service will reevaluate all RARE II areas nationwide through the Forest Service forest planning process. Meanwhile, the Forest Service will continue with its land management of these areas, in keeping with their nonwilderness designation under the RARE II process.

-Under Requirements of the Intergovernmental Coordination Act, BPA has notified the Washington, Idaho, and Montana State Clearinghouses of the project by sending them the draft and final EIS's. The Garrison-Spokane Project is consistent and compatible with State and local development plans to the extent possible. Copies of this Record of Decision will be sent to State clearinghouses for notification of the decisions that have been made.

-The following historic properties in the study area have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and may be affected by having the project within view:

DeBorgia Schoolhouse - Mineral County, Montana; in DeBorgia
Murray Courthouse - Shoshone County, Idaho; in Murray
John C. Feehan House - Shoshone County, Idaho; in Murray
United States Forest Service Remount Depot (Ninemile Ranger Station) - Missoula County, Montana; northwest of Huson
Traveler's Rest - Missoula County, Montana; in Lolo

Other properties listed on or eligible for the National Register may be susceptible to visual intrusion from the transmission line. However, such intrusion would not be likely to affect adversely the qualities for which the properties are listed or are eligible for inclusion. This is because the properties were recognized for their historical significance or their architectural qualities and integrity, not specifically for the quality of their settings.

Numerous prehistoric sites listed in the Montana State Inventory, and presumed to be eligible for the National Register, may be affected by the project. Field evaluations and determinations of eligibility will be made of all sites along the proposed route before construction begins. A memorandum of agreement is being concluded among BPA, the appropriate State Historic Preservation Officer, the FS, the BLM, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation; it stipulates mitigation measures to be carried out should any sites be found eligible.

-The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provided biological opinions on this project in connection with the bald eagle, grizzly bear, gray wolf, and peregrine falcon. These opinions concluded that the project would have "no effect" on these species or their habitats. BPA will send a copy of this Record of Decision to USFWS, informing them of our decision and that the decision complies with the recommendations made in the opinions.

-Between 1 and 6 acres of Prime farmland could be occupied by tower bases, thus converting it to other uses. Because the transmission line route must cross or parallel certain valleys where Prime farmland is concentrated, there is no practicable alternative to such conversion. Various measures listed in Part 4.2, Mitigation, will be used on Prime farmland to minimize the amount taken out of production. These measures basically involve coordination of tower locations with the landowners.

-Under requirements of the Clean Air Act, BPA will secure necessary State air quality and open burning permits.

-In accordance with the requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act, BPA will obtain necessary State water quality and pollution discharge permits.

4.5 Implementation

The following provisions must be met before construction can proceed:

-Right-of-way permits across Federal land (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976) will be issued by the FS and BLM. The right-of-way permit granted by the FS will include, by reference, a Project Plan which will specify mitigation measures required to protect the environment on National Forest System lands. The BLM right-of-way permit will include similar stipulations for BLM land.

-On National Forest System lands only, this decision is subject to a formal administrative review process, pursuant to 36 CFR 211.18. Under this process, any notice of appeal must be filed within 45 days from the date of this Record of Decision. Right-of-way permits will be issued following the appeal period.

5.0 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

George Eskridge, District Manager, Bonneville Power Administration, 800 Kensington, Missoula, Montana 59801; telephone (406) 329-3860.

Copies of this Record of Decision are being sent to agencies, organizations, and individuals who commented on the EIS.

Each Federal decisionmaker, by signing an original copy of this Record of Decision, is making a decision to the extent of the agency's jurisdiction.

Regional Forester, Northern Region
USDA Forest Service

Date: MAY 2 3 1993

State Director, Montana
USDI Bureau of Land Management

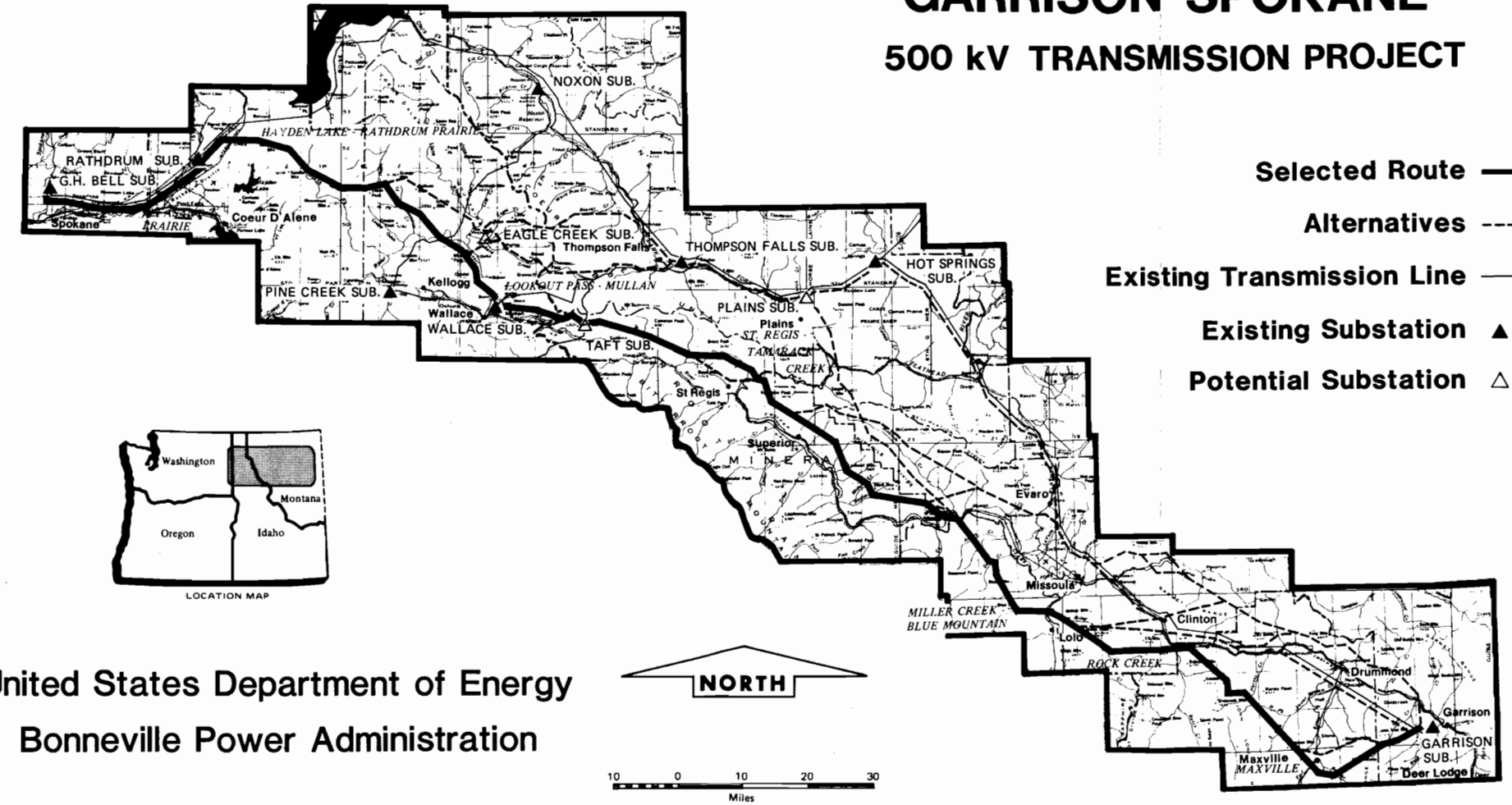
Date: MAY 2 3 1993

Administrator
Bonneville Power Administration

Date: MAY 2 3 1993

GARRISON-SPOKANE

500 kV TRANSMISSION PROJECT



Selected Route ——

Alternatives ----

Existing Transmission Line ——

Existing Substation ▲

Potential Substation △

LOCATION MAP

NORTH

10 0 10 20 30
Miles

10 0 10 20 30
Kilometers

United States Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration

Power Line News

MAY 27, 1983

Special Update

Garrison-Spokane

This special edition of Power Line News announces the route selection of the three federal agencies (Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management) for the Garrison-Spokane 500-kV Transmission Project. In a Record of Decision dated May 23, 1983, the agencies selected the Taft South Route for the project, modifying the 1979 transmission corridor decision from the vicinity of Garrison, Mont., west to Spokane, Wash. The Taft South Route was one of numerous route alternatives considered within three electrical plans of service (the Hot Springs, Plains and Taft plans). The alternative of no action was also considered. Purpose and need, environmental effects, cost considerations, engineering performance and public concerns were considered in this decision.

The Taft South Route proceeds with a double-circuit 500-kV line southwest from Garrison Substation, across the Flint Creek Valley near Maxville, then northwest across the Sapphire Mountains south of Missoula. It will cross the Bitterroot and Clark Fork rivers, then head west near St. Regis to a new ten-acre substation at Taft, Mont. A single-circuit 500-kV line is to be built from Taft Substation west, entering Idaho near Mullan. It will continue through the Coeur d'Alene Mountains, then emerge onto Rathdrum Prairie near Coeur d'Alene, where it will join an existing corridor and continue into Bell Substation at Spokane. Additional terminal equipment will be installed at Garrison and Bell substations. Overall cost of the Taft South plan is $244 million. The Taft South plan was previously designated as the preferred route location in a final Environmental Impact Statement published by the federal agencies in March 1983.

In selecting the Taft South Route, the agencies considered the following factors:

Overall, this route would minimize the environmental impact, including both biophysical and socioeconomic aspects, in keeping with the purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act. The Taft South Route would have the least impact on social and economic resources, developed land, future residential development, agriculture, recreation and visual resources. Although effects on certain natural systems would be higher, an interagency team analysis concluded that these effects generally could be more readily reduced or avoided by mitigation than could social or land use impacts. The interagency team consisted of representatives from the federal agencies and from the Montana State Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

The Taft South route best meets the overriding public concern to avoid impacts on people and their needs.

BPA TRANSMISSION COORDINATION OFFICE / 1620 REGENT / MISSOULA, MONTANA 59806 / TELEPHONE (406) 329-3737

This route encounters about the same number of environmentally sensitive areas as do the other plans. The Taft South Route, however, offers more opportunities to avoid or mitigate effects in such areas than the other plans do. The major sensitive areas encountered by this route are Maxville, Rock Creek, St. Regis, Lookout-Mullan Pass, Hayden Creek and Rathdrum-Pleasant Prairie.

The involved agencies have adopted mitigation measures identified in the final Environmental Impact Statement. These measures are further discussed in the Federal Record of Decision. Inspectors will monitor the project. They will be responsible for insuring that the measures agreed to in the Federal Record of Decision and subsequent project plans, and that right-of-way permits and BPA construction contract specifications are carried out. BPA will work the states through which the line passes to establish mitigation measures on state and private lands.

Summary of Montana State Involvement

Following is a summary of the state of Montana's involvement in the Colstrip generation projects and subsequent transmission lines to transfer the energy from the Colstrip plants to the Colstrip owners' load centers:

In 1976, the Board of Natural Resources and Conservation (BNRC) certified the Colstrip project which included Colstrip generation Units 3 and 4 and a route for two 500-kV lines from Colstrip through Broadview, Townsend and Helena across the Flathead Reservation to Hot Springs, Mont. The Montana Power Co., working for the Colstrip consortium, received permission from the BNRC for the route centerline and requested right-of-way from the federal land management agencies. Because of routing problems encountered by the Colstrip owners, BPA has requested and agreed to construct transmission facilities from the vicinity of Spokane, Wash. to the point where the final federal corridor met the proposed corridor.

The state of Montana, BNRC and BPA entered into a contract and a Memorandum of Understanding in the summer of 1982 to cooperatively study and locate the transmission line from Garrison to Montana's western border. The Department's work included an independent review of the work done by the federal agencies (BPA, USFS and BLM). In December 1982, the interagency team (consisting of BPA, USFS, BLM and DNRC) notified agency decisionmakers that the Taft South Route was preferred.

The federal final Environmental Impact Statement issued in March 1983, concluded that the Taft South Route was preferred. DNRC, in its final report, dated April 1983, to the Board of Natural Resources and Conservation also recommended that BPA construct on the Taft South Route and identified 16 recommendations for the BNRC to consider in addition to

the already agreed-upon interagency recommendation/mitigation measures. The BNRC, on May 6, 1983, recommended the Department's Taft South Route and all the interagency mitigation measures. In addition, the Board adopted in part the other independent 16 recommendations proposed by the DNRC. Federal agencies will continue to work cooperatively with the Department and Board on these measures.

For More Information

Copies of the Record of Decision, a map and a press announcement have been enclosed with this edition of Power Line News to further explain the actions of the federal decisionmakers in selecting the Taft South routing for the Garrison-Spokane project. Future editions of Power Line News will be published to keep citizens up-to-date on construction and other related activities by the federal agencies and state of Montana relative to the Garrison-Spokane 500-kV transmission project.

For further information relative to the Taft South Route, the Record of Decision, and the Federal EIS, write to George Eskridge, Montana District Manager, Bonneville Power Administration, 800 Kensington, Missoula, Mont. 59801, or call him at (406) 329-3860.

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WP-0217B

Department of Energy **Information**

Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 24, 1983

MISSOULA, Mont. -- The Bonneville Power Administration, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management jointly announced the federal decision for the Garrison-Spokane 500-kV transmission line route today.

The decision designates the so-called Taft-South route from the BPA's Garrison Substation near Deer Lodge, Mont., to Spokane, Wash., via Taft, Mont.

The decision reports the Taft-South route has the least social impacts. It affects less residential development, agricultural land, and recreation and visual resources. Acknowledging that effects on some natural resources on the selected route will be higher than on other routes, the record of decision notes that these impacts can be more readily reduced or avoided during construction.

During the route selection process, consideration was given to public responses and those of the congressional delegation.

The three federal agencies and the state of Montana conducted extensive studies of various routes before recommending the Taft-South route. The state of Montana conducted an independent, parallel review and is working cooperatively with the federal agencies in developing mitigation and monitoring plans.

Montana's Board of Natural Resources and Conservation approved the Taft-South route May 6 and recommended changes to further mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

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The state is continuing to study the Rock Creek and Miller Creek area crossings. It's findings may be adopted as part of the site-specific measures in the cooperative federal-state project mitigation and monitoring plan.

The plan calls for BPA to build a 157-mile 500-kV double-circuit transmission line southwest from Garrison Substation. The line will cross the Flint Creek Valley south of Maxville, Rock Creek and the Sapphire Mountains. It will then pass south of Missoula and cross the Bitterroot River near the mouth of Miller Creek. It will cross the Clark Fork River twice, once near Alberton and again north of St. Regis. It will then continue north to the 10-acre site of a new BPA substation at Taft.

A 101-mile single-circuit 500-kV line will extend from Taft into Idaho near Mullan, cross the Coeur d'Alene Mountains and emerge onto Rathdrum Prairie. There it will join an existing transmission corridor to Bell Substation at Spokane. BPA estimates the overall cost of the project at $244 million.

The Record of Decision will be published in the Federal Register. Copies are available to the public from the BPA office at 800 Kensington, Missoula, Mont. 59801.

The Garrison-Spokane lines will carry power from Colstrip generating units to the utilities that own the units. The new lines will also reinforce federal lines in Montana, and improve and maintain the reliability of power systems in Montana and the Pacific Northwest.

The first construction contracts, which will be awarded to clear the right-of-way, are expected to get under way sometime in July.

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