

Independence Avenue, SW,
Washington, DC, between 9:00 am and
4:00 pm, Monday through Friday except
Federal holidays.

Issued at Washington, DC, on November
14, 1996.

Rachel Samuel,
*Acting Deputy Advisory Committee
Management Officer.*

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BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Bonneville Power Administration

Albeni Falls Wildlife Management Plan

AGENCY: Bonneville Power
Administration (BPA), DOE.

ACTION: Finding of No Significant
Impact (FONSI) and Floodplain
Statement of Findings.

SUMMARY: Bonneville Power
Administration (BPA) proposes to fund
the development and implementation of
the Albeni Falls Wildlife Management
Plan (Plan). The Plan addresses wildlife
mitigation projects in the Lake Pend
Oreille, Idaho, vicinity that are
approved by the Northwest Power
Planning Council (Council). The Plan is
a cooperative effort led by an
Interagency Work Group that includes
the Idaho Department of Fish and Game
(IDFG); United States Fish and Wildlife
Service (USFWS); United States Forest
Service (USFS); United States Army
Corps of Engineers (COE); the Kalispel
Tribe; and the Upper Columbia United
Tribes (UCUT).

When implemented, the proposed
action would meet BPA's obligation to
protect, mitigate, and enhance wildlife
affected by construction of Albeni Falls
Dam and is consistent with the
Council's F&W Program and
amendments. BPA's proposed action
would guide the development of
wildlife mitigation projects, increase the
quantity and quality of wetland and
riparian wildlife habitats in the Lake
Pend Oreille study area, and
demonstrate the compatibility of habitat
restoration and wildlife management
with the land use goals and objectives
of Bonner and Kootenai Counties, Idaho.

BPA's proposed action would
increase opportunities for BPA to take
credit for wildlife mitigation under the
Council's F&W Program and allow
funding of wildlife habitat protection,
improvement, O&M, and M&E activities
for the life of the mitigation measures.
The proposed action would enable the
Interagency Work Group to secure both
public and private lands to protect a
variety of wetland and riparian habitats,
restore 28,587 habitat units lost as a

result of the construction of Albeni Falls
Dam, and conduct long-term wildlife
management activities at individual
mitigation projects located within the
overall study area. A detailed Site Plan
would be developed for each wildlife
mitigation project that is consistent with
wildlife mitigation goals (See EA
Chapter 2, pp. 6-9), and landowner or
land management agency objectives.
Site Plans will document all site-
specific habitat improvement, O&M, and
M&E activities to be performed at each
individual mitigation project area.
Exhibits will include but are not limited
to cultural resource reviews, survey
results, and mitigation plans; an erosion
control program; State and Federal
permit approvals as appropriate;
engineering specifications; time
schedules; equipment; and personnel
needs. To ensure environmental impacts
are within the range of those addressed
in this EA, all completed Site Plans
would be submitted to and approved by
BPA prior to funding and
implementation decisions.

BPA has prepared an environmental
assessment (DOE/EA-1099) evaluating
the potential environmental effects of
No Action (Alternative A) and the
proposed action (Alternative B).
Restoring wetland and riparian habitat
under Alternative B would not cause
significant environmental impact
because: (1) There would be only
limited, short-term impacts on soils, air
quality, water quality, wildlife
(including no effect on endangered
species), vegetation, and fish; and (2)
there would be no significant effects on
cultural resources or land use. Based on
the analysis in the environmental
assessment (EA), BPA has determined
that the proposed action is not a major
Federal action significantly affecting the
quality of the human environment,
within the meaning of the National
Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of
1969. Therefore, the preparation of an
environmental impact statement (EIS) is
not required and BPA is issuing this
FONSI.

A finding is included that there is no
practicable alternative to locating
wildlife habitat mitigation projects
within a 100-year floodplain.

ADDRESSES: For copies of this FONSI,
please call BPA's toll-free document
request line: 800-622-4520.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Robert L. Shank—ECN, Bonneville
Power Administration, P.O. Box 3621,
Portland, Oregon, 97208-3621, phone
number 503-230-5115, fax number
503-230-5699.

Public Availability: This FONSI will
be distributed to all persons and

agencies known to be interested in or
affected by the proposed action or
alternatives.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under
provisions of the Pacific Northwest
Electric Power Planning and
Conservation Act of 1980 (Act), BPA
protects, mitigates, and enhances fish
and wildlife and their habitats affected
by the construction and operation of the
Federal hydroelectric system in the
Columbia River Basin. This is
accomplished through funding of
measures that are consistent with the
Council's Fish and Wildlife Program
(F&W Program) and other purposes of
the Act [16 U.S.C. 839b(h)(10)(A)]. The
site-specific fish and wildlife mitigation
projects that BPA funds are intended to
help reach the Council's mitigation
goals and are "in addition to, not in lieu
of, other expenditures authorized or
required from other entities under other
agreements or provisions of law."

In 1989, the Council amended its
F&W Program to include assessments of
wildlife habitat losses resulting from
construction of Albeni Falls Dam.
Consistent with Section 1003(7) of the
Program's Wildlife Mitigation Rule, the
Council reviewed and approved Albeni
Falls wildlife mitigation projects in
1990.

Under Alternative B, the proposed
action, effects on the physical
environment (soils, water quality, and
air quality) would be localized and
short-term in duration. In the long-term
wildlife habitat improvement activities
would be beneficial for the soils
resource by reducing the amount of soils
that are exposed to erosion by Albeni
Falls Dam operations and other existing
land use practices. In the near-term,
construction activities such as the
installation of water structures and
breakwaters, creation of small islands,
re-establishment of native vegetation,
and other work activities near water
bodies would be timed to minimize
adverse soil rutting and compaction that
could temporarily increase soil erosion,
transport, and stream sedimentation at
construction sites. In areas where re-
establishing native vegetation would
temporarily disturb or expose poorly
drained soils, erosion risks would be
reduced by planting cover crops,
applying ground mulch, or irrigating
new plantings as appropriate. As part of
Alternative B, a qualified soil scientist
would participate in each individual
Site Plan process prior to ground
disturbing activities to coordinate site-
specific soil surveys that are critical in
identifying and avoiding significant soil
erosion and sedimentation effects and
establishing cost-effective wildlife

mitigation projects. Each Site Plan will contain a Soils Capability Section that identifies existing soil type, soil suitability, soil monitoring, and all other mitigation factors that are relevant to the design of structures, construction activities, and habitat improvement efforts. If sediment will be released into navigable waters of the United States, all conditions of Federal Clean Water Act permits, including the development of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, will be required as an attachment to the Site Plan. This would ensure that erosion control measures are identified, implemented, and monitored, during construction activities. Each Site Plan will document Best Management Practices developed for soil stabilization, erosion control structures, stormwater management, and other erosion monitoring or conditions as required at all sites where construction activities would occur on soils with a severe risk for erosion potential, or disturb land of 2 or more hectares (5 acres) in size. The Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group will avoid wildlife improvement activities that would adversely impact soils and water quality parameters. These steps would ensure that soil erosion and sedimentation effects are not significant.

Wildlife habitat improvement and restoration of wetlands would be beneficial for water resources in the long-term. Protection of existing riparian systems and restoration of damaged riparian areas would increase bank stabilization, increase shading, reduce stream temperatures, and reduce sediment and pollutant load into study area streams. Wetland restoration would contribute locally to an increase in ground and surface water quality, raise groundwater levels, and buffer the effects of adverse drawdown and wave action effects. Due to the physical effects of sediment settling, uptake of nutrients in vegetation, stream shading, and other natural wetland processes, the quality of wetland return flows is expected to equal or exceed existing water quality conditions.

Certification that a discharge would not violate State water quality standards is a prerequisite for obtaining Federal Clean Water Act permits. Because some construction activities such as the installation of water structures, breakwaters, or creation of small islands could unavoidably violate State of Idaho water quality standards (particularly turbidity criteria) on a temporary basis, BPA would ensure Federal Clean Water Act permits, (i.e. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System including State of Idaho modifications, and/or Nationwide permits as appropriate), are

acquired and all conditions or requirements necessary to avoid significant water quality impacts are in place prior to the point discharge of any sediment into Lake Pend Oreille or its tributaries. Any work in or near water bodies involving the potential for dredge materials or soils entering streams or waters of the United States would conform to all additional State of Idaho conditions or permit requirements. Adverse water quality effects as a result of Alternative B activities are not expected because significant soil erosion and sedimentation would be avoided through adherence to permit conditions. Water quality monitoring would be implemented at all construction sites to ensure the amount of sediment entering water bodies remains within permitted limits.

Although burning of outdoor vegetation could occur on small, 0.8–1.6 hectare (2–4 acre), dispersed plots to remove undesirable weeds, the amount of required burning in the project area and, therefore, the amount of air quality impact, would be slight because native vegetation plots would increase in density and out-compete and shade out weedy vegetation. It is estimated that revegetation efforts would effectively decrease the amount of burning activities required to improve wildlife habitat conditions within two to three years. Outdoor burning permits would be obtained from the local Fire District prior to burning activities. To minimize near-term smoke emission effects, outdoor burning would occur only on days authorized by the local Clean Air Authority. The amount of PM₁₀ (smoke/particulate matter less than 10 microns) and carbon monoxide emissions would be minimized by seeking alternatives to burning and/or meeting requirements for fuel type, dryness, and quantity, and all other conditions of the burning permit.

Potential adverse effects on biological resources, including vegetation, wildlife, and fisheries, would be localized and short-term in nature. Because of the wetter climate and the availability of ground and surface water in the aquatic, riparian, and upland zones of the study area, it is predicted that plant response would be relatively rapid and habitat improvement could be observed in a single growing season for many herbaceous species, and from two to five years for larger shrubs or trees. Near-term effects of native vegetation restoration may involve the potential disturbance of localized native plant species. Because construction activities would take place in areas that have been disturbed in the past or contain large

non-native plant communities, negative long-term effects on native vegetation are not anticipated. Near-term adverse effects to remnant wetland, riparian, and upland native plant communities in site-specific areas are not expected because Site Plan(s) for individual wildlife mitigation projects would identify existing native plant communities and the sensitive plant habitat areas to be avoided prior to ground disturbing wildlife habitat improvement activity and/or revegetation effort. In areas where construction activities can not be avoided with out temporarily impacting existing native plant communities, top soils would be stockpiled, replaced, and revegetated to the extent feasible on completion of ground work. Chemical use to control noxious weeds would decline in the long-term due to the lesser degree of soils exposed to seed sources. Adverse effects to aquatic and other non-target organisms are not anticipated as integrated pest management techniques including bio-controls would be preferred. Chemicals, when used, would be applied by licensed applicators and would conform to State and Federal regulations including label restrictions and use of chemical products suitable for aquatic environments.

Securing and enhancing land for wildlife purposes would provide immediate and long-term benefits to wildlife populations. Wildlife disturbances due to construction and other habitat improvement activities are predicted to be of short duration, and localized in nature. It is expected that near-term disturbance of wildlife could be offset within one growing season by the greatly increased habitat values. Because biological requirements of wildlife and protection of wildlife habitat would take precedence over other considerations, positive long-term benefits for both ESA-listed and candidate species would result. Permanent protection of wetland and riparian habitat in the study area is not expected to interfere with ongoing gray wolf, grizzly bear, and woodland caribou recovery goals. It is likely the near-term disturbance effects resulting from construction activities would be minimal to ESA-listed species. Disturbance to nesting and wintering bald eagles would be avoided because the majority of the work would occur from late July through October. Consultation with the USFWS would be re-initiated during the Site Plan process if work is planned outside this timeframe, or construction activities are proposed within 4 km (2.5 mi) of known

nest sites or within 1 km (0.6 mi) of the shoreline of a lake, river, or backwater area during the typical winter season (November-February). BPA would coordinate with the USFWS prior to all construction activities to determine if any new bald eagle nesting sites or newly listed species have been identified in a given wildlife mitigation area. After completion of site-specific habitat enhancement activities, public access by motorized vehicles would be restricted, as necessary, to reduce disturbance of nesting and wintering bald eagles. Potential adverse effects to other listed species are expected to be minimal, because it is unlikely that peregrine falcons, gray wolves, grizzly bears, and/or woodland caribou would be found in the study area during the time work activities are occurring. In a letter dated February 8, 1996, the USFWS concurred with BPA's determination that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect the Federally listed species.

Effects on fish resources resulting from increased stream turbidity would be short-term and localized at construction sites occurring near streams or water bodies. As part of Alternative B, adverse fishery effects would be avoided by complying with all terms and conditions of Federal and State water quality permits and/or other applicable IDFG guidelines. These include guidelines such as timing of construction activities to ensure water quality will at all times continue to support aquatic life. On a site-specific basis, for example, potential adverse effects on fish populations would be avoided through timing of construction activities, inspection of the site for presence of sensitive species, and, if necessary, capture and temporary removal of sensitive fish species at the treatment site. Potential adverse impacts to spawning or rearing habitats would be avoided by timing instream work to avoid siltation on spawning gravels, instream hiding structures, and rocks prior to and immediately after the egg hatching phase.

Cultural resource sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are known to exist in the Lake Pend Oreille study area, and the probability of yet-undiscovered sites is high. Wildlife habitat improvement activities are generally compatible with cultural resource goals for protecting, preserving, and stabilizing historic, prehistoric, and traditional use sites and areas. A Programmatic Agreement (PA) would be developed in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Idaho State Historic

Preservation Office (SHPO), and affected Tribes to ensure any effects to cultural resources are not significant. The PA will outline the provisions and steps necessary to protect cultural resources as site-specific wildlife habitat improvement activities are planned and implemented. In accordance with PA provisions, professional cultural resource staff would participate in each individual Site-Plan process prior to ground disturbing activities to coordinate cultural resource literature reviews and surveys and all other cultural resource mitigation efforts. SHPO and Tribal review of cultural resource protection methodologies and findings would be obtained prior to site-specific ground disturbing activities. The Albeni Falls Interagency Work Group members would avoid wildlife habitat improvement activities that would significantly impact historical or cultural resources on or eligible for NRHP listing. These steps will ensure there are no significant effects on cultural resources.

Because habitat mitigation objectives would not change existing private land practices within the study area, the Albeni Falls Wildlife management plan is consistent with current Bonner and Kootenai County land use direction. Adverse effects to private property rights or to public management objectives are not expected because site-specific land use changes would occur only at the discretion of a landholder or manager. No effects to local growth patterns are anticipated because the current 50 percent vacancy rate of land available for recreational and rural housing opportunities would remain high. Current zoning categories would not change and wildlife mitigation projects would help to meet open space objectives within Bonner and Kootenai Counties.

Because habitat and wetlands restoration activities are not an irreversible process, prime and unique farmland designations would not change and farm use would not be precluded in the future. Significant effects to prime farmlands in the study area are not likely because major portions of prime farmland would not be taken out of crop production. If designated prime farmland currently under irrigated crop production is secured for use as a wildlife habitat mitigation project, cultivation of wildlife food plots and/or other agricultural options would be developed in individual Site Plans to avoid large or major cropland conversions.

Because conservation easements and leases are the preferred manner for securing wildlife habitat acreage, land

ownership and the responsibility for property taxes would not be transferred from existing land owners. No reduction in the tax base of Bonner or Kootenai County would occur when BPA purchases fee property, because title would be transferred to IDFG for wildlife mitigation and management purposes. IDFG would be responsible for in-lieu taxes as required by Section 63-105A of the Idaho Tax Code. Over half of current waterfowl hunters reside outside of the local area. Over the next 10-12 years an increase of hunting opportunities would help to stimulate or extend the local tourism economy thus increasing local tax revenues.

To avoid adverse disturbance effects on wildlife populations seasonal road closures and/or public access restrictions would be enacted, as appropriate, during critical winter and breeding periods. No adverse recreation effects are expected because the majority of public use occurs in summer and fall seasons. Management of public access would provide greater flexibility in disbursing or focusing increased recreation demand from or to existing local Wildlife Management Areas.

Floodplain Statement of Findings

This is a Floodplain Statement of Findings prepared in accordance with 10 CFR Part 1022. A Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement was published in the Federal Register on June 15, 1995 and a floodplain and wetlands assessment was incorporated into the EA. BPA funding of wildlife mitigation projects in the Lake Pend Oreille study area would result in the restoration of as much as 809 hectares (2000 acres) of former wetlands over the next 5-10 years. Re-establishment of wetland structures, processes, and functions in areas where floodplains and wetlands have been altered by Albeni Falls Dam drawdown operations would have positive benefits on floodplain vegetation that would help to buffer the effects of wave and wind action on existing mudflats. Although floods have not occurred in the study area since the construction of Albeni Falls Dam, permanent buildings, roads, or facilities would not be located in restored floodplain or wetland areas. Adverse flooding effects would not occur as a result of wildlife habitat mitigation projects. The proposed action conforms to applicable State and local floodplain protection standards.

BPA will endeavor to allow 15 days of public review after publication of this statement of findings before implementing the proposed action.

Determination

Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, BPA determines that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Portland, Oregon, on November 1, 1996.

Alexandra B. Smith,

Vice President for Environment, Fish and Wildlife.

[FR Doc. 96-29541 Filed 11-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. TM97-5-23-000]

Eastern Shore Natural Gas Company; Notice of Proposed Changes in FERC Gas Tariff

November 13, 1996.

Take notice that on November 7, 1996 Eastern Shore Natural Gas Company (ESNG) tendered for filing as part of its FERC Gas Tariff, First Revised Volume No. 1, certain revised tariff sheets in the above captioned dockets, with a proposed effective date of October 1, 1996.

ESNG states that the purpose of the instant filing is to track rate changes attributable to storage service purchased from Transcontinental Gas Pipe Line Corporation (Transco) under their Rate Schedules GSS and LSS respectively, the costs of which are included in the rates and charges payable under ESNG's Rate Schedules GSS-1 and LSS-1 effective October 1, 1996. As stated above ESNG proposes to track the changes concurrently with Transco. This tracking filing is being filed pursuant to Section 24 of the General Terms and Conditions of ESNG's FERC Gas Tariff.

ESNG states that copies of the filing have been served upon its jurisdictional customers and interested State Commissions.

Any person desiring to be heard or to protest said filing should file a motion to intervene or protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426, in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR Section 385.211 or Section 385.214). All such motions or protests must be filed as provided in Section 154.210 of the Commission's Regulations. Protests will

be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Any person wishing to become a party must file a motion to intervene. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-29512 Filed 11-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

[Docket No. CP97-82-000]

Mississippi River Transmission Corporation; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization

November 13, 1996.

Take notice that on November 4, 1996, Mississippi River Transmission Corporation (MRT), whose main office is located at 1600 Smith Street, Houston, Texas 77002, filed in Docket No. CP97-82-000 a request pursuant to Sections 157.205, 157.216 of the Commission's Regulations under the Natural Gas Act (18 CFR 157.205, 157.216) for authorization to abandon and remove an inactive meter and regulating station in Iron County, Missouri, under MRT's blanket certificate issued in Docket No. CP82-489-000 pursuant to Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act, all as more fully set forth in the request that is on file with the Commission and open to public inspection.

MRT proposes to abandon and remove an inactive meter and regulating station on Line A-198 in Section 30, Township 34 North, Range 4 East, Iron County, Missouri. This inactive delivery tap is not utilized in the delivery of natural gas quantities and the company, Pilot Knob Pellet Company, served by this metering facility is no longer in existence. There is no other existing customer service through this meter.

MRT states that this abandonment is not prohibited by its existing tariff and that it has sufficient capacity to continue to render transportation service to customers connected to its pipeline system. The abandonment will not have an effect on MRT's peak day and annual deliveries. The abandonment of these facilities will not require any new construction. The line and tap will be abandoned in place and the aboveground facilities will be removed.

Any person or the Commission's staff may, within 45 days after issuance of the instant notice by the Commission, file pursuant to Rule 214 of the

Commission's Procedural Rules (18 CFR 385.214) a motion to intervene or notice of intervention and pursuant to Section 157.205 of the Regulations under the Natural Gas Act (18 CFR 157.205) a protest to the request. If no protest is filed within the time allowed therefor, the proposed activity shall be deemed to be authorized effective the day after the time allowed for filing a protest. If a protest is filed and not withdrawn within 30 days after the time allowed for filing a protest, the instant request shall be treated as an application for authorization pursuant to Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96-29508 Filed 11-18-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M

[Docket No. RP96-308-000]

Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company; Notice of Motion To Continue Pilot Program

November 13, 1996.

Take notice that on October 25, 1996, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (Tennessee) filed a motion to continue on a pilot basis through the spring of 1997 the effectiveness of tariff sheets that went into effect in this docket on September 1, 1996, as modified.¹ Under those tariff sheets, shippers on Tennessee's system may utilize the services of third party providers (TPP) under Tennessee's Storage Swing Option (SSO). SSO allows Tennessee's customers to use their firm storage entitlements to manage their imbalances in lieu of the cashout mechanism.

Tennessee states that maintaining the TPP tariff sheets in effect on a pilot basis over the course of a full winter season will enable it to more accurately gauge customer interest in TPP service, whether it can provide the service on a permanent basis taking into account the operational complexities of the service, and whether any modifications of the existing tariff sheets would be warranted.

Tennessee states that the motion was served on all parties on the Commission's official service list in this proceeding.

Any person desiring to respond to Tennessee's motion should file an answer with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426, in accordance with Section 213 of the

¹ See *Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company*, 76 FERC ¶ 61,225 (1996).