DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Bonneville Power Administration

Kalispell Maintenance Headquarters Project
Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for BPA's Proposed Kalispell Maintenance Headquarters Project.

SUMMARY: BPA is proposing to build a maintenance headquarters in Kalispell, Montana. The facility would consist of 2 to 4 single-story buildings totalling about 35,000 square feet. The facility would require developing about 6 to 10 acres of land. BPA has prepared an environmental assessment (DOE/EA-0516) evaluating two site options.

The project would not cause significant environmental impact based on its consistency with local land use plans; minimal visual effects; and avoidance of wetlands, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive areas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROJECT AND COPIES OF THE EA CONTACT:

John Taves, Environmental Coordinator for Engineering, Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 3621-EFBG, Portland, Oregon 97208; telephone (503) 230-4995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

PROCESS CONTACT: Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Oversight, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20585; telephone (202) 586-4600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The maintenance headquarters is needed to maintain and repair Bonneville Power Administration's electrical equipment in northwest Montana. These maintenance functions are currently occurring in two locations in the Kalispell area. Coordination and communication between the two sites

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is difficult. Also, the use of two sites results in duplication of equipment and facilities. BPA needs a single, centralized facility that would accommodate all maintenance activities in the area.

Further discussion of the need for the project, the proposal, scope of analysis, and the alternatives is found in the EA.

Reasons that impacts are not significant are presented below.

BPA considered a No Action alternative, and the Proposed alternative with two site options (an Option 1 site and an Option 2 site). The proposed project at either of the site options would have no effect on endangered species, wetlands, floodplains, historic or cultural resources, or other sensitive environmental resources. The project at either site would be consistent with local land use plans and would have minimal effect on prime farmland and aesthetic values.

BPA is proposing to build the maintenance headquarters project at the Option 1 site.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY: This Finding will be distributed to all persons and agencies known to be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

DETERMINATION: Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, DOE determines that BPA's 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, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and the Department is issuing this FONSI.

Issued in Washington, D.C., on *Oct. 10, 1991*

Paul L. Ziemer, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

KALISPELL MAINTENANCE HEADQUARTERS PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

1.0 NEED FOR ACTION

The facilities needed to maintain and repair Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA's) electrical equipment in northwest Montana are currently in two locations: A maintenance headquarters at the Kalispell Substation, and a temporary leased facility south of Kalispell. The present situation is not efficient. There is not enough space to accommodate the equipment needed at each site, and coordination and communication between the two sites is difficult. Also, two sites means duplication of equipment and facilities. BPA needs a single, centralized facility that would efficiently accommodate all the area's maintenance activities and equipment.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

No Action

Maintenance activities would continue to be performed at the two present locations in Kalispell. The problems described above would continue. Maintenance activities on BPA's electrical system in northwest Montana would not be efficient.

Description of the Proposed Action

BPA proposes to build a maintenance headquarters facility consisting of 2 to 4 single-story buildings totalling about 35,000 square feet (office spaces and workshop areas); an open-ended vehicle storage building (carport style); a fenced-in storage yard; a storage building for flammables, herbicides, and hazardous wastes; and a parking lot. The facility would require developing about 6 to 10 acres of land.

Two sites are being considered for the proposed project (see the attached map for locations).

Site **Option 1** (proposed) is located northeast of central Kalispell next to an existing Flathead Electric Cooperative (FEC) maintenance headquarters. This is a semi-developed area next to Highway 2, with both commercial and industrial uses surrounding the site. The site is owned by FEC, and is currently farmed.

Site **Option 2** is located next to the existing Kalispell Substation, about 4 miles east of Kalispell, Montana. The existing substation and the adjacent site are next to Highway 35, in a farmland and rural residential area. The site is privately owned (two landowners), and is currently farmed.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Land Use

According to the Flathead Regional Development Office, site **Option 1** is zoned for industrial uses; site **Option 2** is not zoned. Proposed uses at either site would be consistent with local land use plans.

Kalispell Maintenance Headquarters Project

Agriculture

Although currently farmed, the **Option 1** site is committed to urban development (industrial zone), and therefore is not considered Prime farmland, according to the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (7 U.S.C. 4201 et. seq.). The site also does not contain any significant on-farm investments.

The **Option 2** site is located on land designated by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) as Prime farmland. One of the farm operators has also invested in mechanical irrigation systems on his land. However, an evaluation of the site according to criteria set forth in the FPPA has determined that the site should be given a minimal level of consideration for protection. Construction of the maintenance headquarters at this site would be consistent with the FPPA, since the project would not change the agricultural use of adjacent farmlands, would not affect the area's farm support services, and would have little or no interference with agricultural operations on adjacent farmlands. The amount of Prime farmland removed from production would be insignificant in context with the total amount of Prime farmland in Flathead County.

According to the Flathead County Noxious Weed Department, the noxious weeds occurring in the general area are Canada thistle, Musk thistle, Russian thistle, Kochia, Quackgrass, Spotted knapweed, and Houndstongue. Weeds would be controlled by standard BPA practices of chemical, biological, or mechanical means.

Fish and Wildlife

Impacts described below hold true for **either site**. No impacts on fish or fishery habitat would be expected to occur from the project. No water courses drain **either site**; no changes would cause run-off to reach any body of water.

Both sites are currently under cultivation. Wildlife species that use these types of habitat are various small mammals and birds. The habitat is not unique to the area, and many other acres of similar types exist in the project area. Those individual animals would be displaced during construction and would not return if their habitat were removed. Although this would be a long-term impact, it would not be significant because the amount of habitat removed would be small compared to the amount remaining in the general area.

Bald eagle and peregrine falcon are threatened and endangered species that could occur in the general project area. However, both sites are currently being cultivated in developed or semi-developed areas and would be some distance from any potential habitat of the those species. In consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see Attachment 1), a BPA wildlife biologist has determined that no potential habitat (including critical habitat) of Federally listed endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species or of State-listed endangered and threatened species would be affected by the project.

Historic and Cultural Resources

No historic or cultural properties would be affected by the project at the **Option 2** site, as determined by consultation with the Montana State Historic

Preservation Officer (SHPO). Therefore, SHPO did not request a field survey of Option 2. A field survey of the Option 1 site was conducted by a professional archaeologist (April 1991), as requested by the SHPO. No evidence of archaeological or historical sites was found.

There is no evidence to suggest that the project at either site would affect sacred sites or sites related to the religious rites or ceremonies of American Indians. A review of the National Registry of Natural Landmarks, the World Heritage List, and the National Registry of National Landmarks indicates that no listed properties are present in the potential impact area of either of the project sites. If archaeological/historic resources were to be discovered during construction of the project, BPA would consult with appropriate officials to develop methods for avoiding impacts on important resources.

Therefore, neither of the options would affect archaeological/historic resources.

Visual

Neither the Option 1 site nor the Option 2 site would have adverse visual impacts. Although both would change the visual character of their respective sites, they would not be inconsistent with adjacent uses. The Option 1 site would be in an industrial and commercial area. The site itself is an open field bordered on each side by existing buildings. The visual/esthetic quality of these buildings ranges from excellent to poor, due to the diversity of styles, material, and age. FEC's headquarters complex is adjacent to the site and is similar to BPA's proposed project. The design and layout of BPA's new complex would complement FEC's buildings and could be considered a positive addition to this industrial zone. It would enhance, rather than detract, from the character of the area. Views of the complex would be primarily from Highway 2, which carries about 1,400 vehicles a day. Views would be in the foreground, but brief.

Although the Option 2 site is in a less developed area, its proximity to an existing BPA substation would allow a maintenance complex to be located here without changing the character of the area. Residents of the area would have no direct views of the project; homes are either too far away or screened by vegetation. Southwest-bound travelers on Highway 35 would see the maintenance headquarters expansion. However, Highway 35 carries fewer vehicles than Highway 2 (along Option 1), and the visual impacts would be negligible. Views would be brief; there would be some landscaping in front of the facilities; and the proposed project would be consistent with the existing substation facilities.

Soils

Soils-related impacts posed by either Option 1 or 2 would be slight, localized, and short-term. The erosion risk is "slight" for Option 1 and "slight-to-moderate" for Option 2 ^{1/}. During and immediately after construction, erosion and sedimentation would increase slightly at either site option. No long-term or severe erosion impacts would be expected.

^{1/} USDA-SCS, July 1970 (revised 1982) Engineering Properties & Soil Interpretation for Use In Resource Planning & Development; A Supplement to: Soil Survey, Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana, Sept. 1960).

The soils at both site options have a tendency to pond water on the surface and are susceptible to frost-heaving. The soils at the **Option 2** site also have limited load bearing capacity. The facilities would be designed with these conditions in mind.

Water Resources

The project at **either site** would not be within, and would not affect a 100-year floodplain or wetland area, as determined by review of Flood Insurance Rate Maps, topographic maps, and field review (in accordance with E.O. 11988 and 11990).

The surface soil at site **Option 1** has a slow percolation rate. However, at depths of 1.4 to 7 feet below the surface, the soil is coarse sand and gravel, with a much greater percolation rate. The upper surface of the groundwater level was observed at about 14 feet below the surface.^{2/} **Option 2** has a seasonal groundwater table less than 3 feet below the surface.^{3/} Because of either the presence of groundwater relatively close to the surface, or highly permeable soils, the facility at either site would be designed to contain potential spills of possible contaminants. No dry wells would be associated with the maintenance headquarters.

The maintenance headquarters would have three small storage buildings to hold herbicides (20 to 50 gallons), flammables (about 5 gallons of solvents), and hazardous or toxic wastes. The storage buildings would be built to contain any accidental spills of the stored materials. BPA would use specialized building designs and maintenance procedures to prevent contaminants from infiltrating the ground or entering storm water run-off. Used solvents and oils would be contained where they are generated (the maintenance workshops) and transferred to the hazardous waste accumulation building in accordance with EPA regulations. Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) capacitors would be taken out of substations in the area and stored only temporarily at the maintenance facility (maximum of 30 days, in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] regulations). The capacitors would then be shipped to BPA's Utilization and Disposal facility in Vancouver, Washington, before being sent to an EPA-approved disposal site. As with most BPA facilities, a Spill Prevention Countermeasure Plan would be developed for the headquarters to handle any potential spills.

No special sources of water (sole-source aquifers or surface waters) are located at either site or would be affected by the project. However, there is local concern about nutrient and bacterial contamination of groundwater due to inadequate septic systems in the area of site **Option I**. The headquarters' waste disposal system at site **Option I** would be designed to connect to a city sewer line that is planned for the area. Until the city sewer is available, an on-site septic system would be used. This system would be designed with the capability of reducing nitrogen and phosphorous, and

^{2/} (Field and Laboratory Test Results - Flathead Electric Coop, Northern Testing Laboratories, Inc., Billings, MT)

^{3/} USDA-SCS, July 1970 (revised 1982) Engineering Properties & Soil Interpretation for Use In Resource Planning & Development; A Supplement to: Soil Survey, Upper Flathead Valley Area, Montana, Sept. 1960).

of lessening bacterial populations in accordance with the Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences' policy on siting of wastewater treatment systems in this area.

Recreation

No recreation facilities or activities would be affected by the project at either site. Although there are two baseball fields adjacent to the **Option 1** site, they would not be physically affected. Since the sport does not require visual amenities for its enjoyment, there would be no esthetic impact. No protected natural areas (such as wilderness, National Parks, National Natural Landmarks, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Trails Systems, wildlife refuges, wilderness or roadless areas, or Bureau of Land Management Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and marine sanctuaries) would be affected by the project at either site, as determined by map and field reviews.

Traffic

Fewer than 30 people would work at the facility, and would drive private vehicles to and from the headquarters every day. There would be about 20 work vans and about four to six larger trucks on site. Between 10 and 20 of the vans would be used each day. Work vans and trucks may leave and return the same day or be gone for several days. In a most extreme case, there might be a total of about 60 vehicles that would leave and return to the facility throughout a given day; on most days probably no more than 40 vehicles. This would be a relatively small increase in traffic along the highways at either site.

Construction

During construction, some minor, short-term impacts would occur at either site. There would be some increased traffic from construction crews and equipment. Air quality impacts would result primarily from dust and exhaust emissions from construction equipment. BPA would take dust abatement measures (applying water to access routes is the usual way) as necessary to prevent construction dust from becoming a local nuisance. Exhaust emissions would be minimized by using properly maintained vehicles and equipment.

Other Regulations

The project would not cause discharges into waters of the United States. However, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (Clean Water Act) for discharge of stormwaters would be obtained, as appropriate. The project would not involve land administered by other Federal agencies, so permits for rights-of-way on such lands would not be required. The proposed action would violate no statute, regulation, permit, or DOE Order.

Energy conservation design features will be incorporated into the maintenance headquarters under BPA's Energy Smart Design Program. This program aims to improve the energy efficiency of BPA's commercial buildings in the region. The headquarters buildings will be designed to exceed Model Conservation Standards energy efficiency by at least 30 percent.

4.0 SUMMARY

BPA is proposing to build the maintenance headquarters at the **Option 1** site. The project would have slightly less environmental impact there.

The facilities would be more consistent with the surrounding industrial uses, and no Prime farmland would be affected. The four-lane highway along the **Option 1** site would make truck access to the facilities much easier than the access to the **Option 2** site. Site **Option 1** would also affect fewer landowners. Consultation with interested and affected local and State agencies revealed no controversy and no unusual environmental concerns.

5.0 AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED

Flathead County Planning Department
Montana State Historic Preservation Officer
Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences
U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Soil Conservation Service

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ATTACHMENT 1

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Fish and Wildlife Enhancement
Federal Bldg., U.S. Courthouse
301 South Park
P.O. Box 10023
Helena, Montana 59626

IN REPLY REFER TO:

April 5, 1991

Mr. Phillip D. Havens
Bonneville Power Administration
P O Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

Dear Mr. Havens:

We have reviewed your biological assessment regarding potential impacts of the proposed Kalispell Maintenance Headquarters project in Flathead County, Montana on the endangered bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

We concur with your determination that the proposed activities are not likely to affect the subject endangered species.

Sincerely,

for Kemper M. McMaster
Field Supervisor
Montana-Wyoming Field Office

LLL/ndg
(B:HAVENS.LTR)

cc: Larry Lockard, Kalispell Suboffice, FWS - Kalispell, MT

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