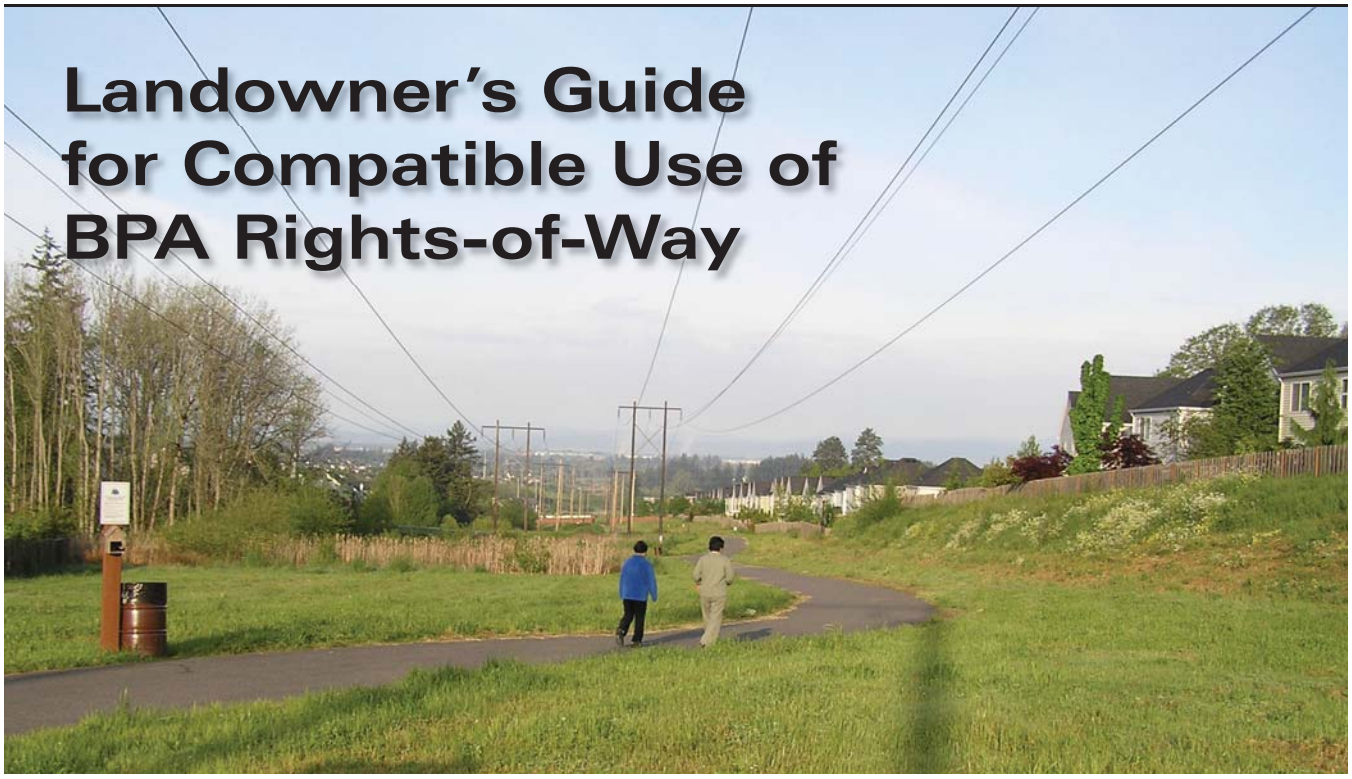
Landowner's Guide for Compatible Use of BPA Rights-of-Way



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We need your help to keep the way clear for safe and reliable service

Keeping transmission lines safe and reliable is a critical priority for the Bonneville Power Administration. The key element in achieving those objectives is BPA's ability to construct, operate and maintain its transmission lines and rights-of-way—the area under and around the lines.

You can help BPA keep these rights-of-way clear of, trees, brush and structures that could affect the safety or reliability of the transmission system.

Prior to planting, digging, or constructing within BPA's rights-of-way, fill out BPA's Land Use Application Form. The information you provide on the application helps BPA understand your proposed use and the potential impacts to public safety, and the safety of our crews. BPA also reviews the application to determine whether a proposed use of land is compatible with the construction, operation and maintenance of BPA transmission lines. Coordinating with BPA early in your planning process can keep you safe and avoid wasting time and money.

Keep the way clear for safety and service

Coordination of land uses

BPA's rights-of-way can sometimes be available for other, compatible, uses. BPA wants to help you carry out your plans in ways that are safe and satisfactory for everyone. Therefore, you are encouraged to make prior arrangements with BPA through the Land Use Application process.

BPA takes several factors into consideration when applications for use of the right-of-way are reviewed. Our transmission lines were designed

to take topography, physical features, environmental and cultural constraints into consideration. BPA's land rights as they relate to the location of your proposed use are also reviewed. If your project is not compatible with BPA's transmission lines, you may be asked to modify your design. In extreme cases, BPA may be able to modify its transmission facilities; however, you would be required to pay for the modifications.

Please consider the following guidelines when preparing your application:

- Maintain at least 50 feet of clearance from BPA's poles, structures or guy wires, whether it be vegetation, roads, fences, utilities, pipelines, or any other improvements.
- Maintain at least 30 feet of clearance from the top of any vegetation and the lowest point of BPA's wires. Do not attempt to measure this distance yourself! You only need to identify the species of the vegetation you propose to plant in the right-of-way so that BPA can consider the mature height of the vegetation.
- Design underground utilities to withstand HS-20 loadings (a federal highway standard).

Who we are

The Bonneville Power Administration is a federal agency headquartered in Portland, Oregon, that markets wholesale electricity and transmission services to the Pacific Northwest's public and private utilities as well as to some large industries.

BPA provides about 40 percent of the electricity used in the Northwest and operates more than 15,000 circuit miles of transmission lines. To deliver power, BPA operates and maintains a transmission network throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana with small portions into Wyoming, Nevada, Utah and California.

- Design roads, utilities and pipelines to cross BPA's rights-of-way, rather than a long, linear alignment.
- Assure concurrence of underlying property owner when not BPA.

Three important steps

There are three important steps that you can take to keep safe and avoid wasting time and money:

1. Call BPA before you plant, dig or construct: 1-800-836-6619.
2. Fill out BPA's Land Use Application: *www.transmission.bpa.gov/LanCom*
3. Obtain a permit from BPA before proceeding with your project.

Location surveys

You are encouraged to have a licensed surveyor determine the location of the BPA easement before beginning any construction activities. Unfortunately, many people inadvertently build structures on BPA easements because they believe they know the boundaries of their property, and believe measuring off the conductor or centerline of the towers is sufficient to fix the location of the easement. Without survey instruments, knowledge of survey law and an understanding of BPA's right-of-ways, it is impossible to accurately locate property boundaries. By having your surveyor coordinate with the BPA Survey Section, we can prevent many of the encroachment problems that BPA experiences (call 1-800-836-6619 and ask to be connected to BPA's Survey Section).

Danger trees

BPA must identify and arrange to cut trees that, although outside the right-of-way, may threaten the transmission line because they may fall into the conductor (wires) or structures. Trees that are unstable, diseased, dead or leaning toward the transmission facilities don't need to touch power lines to be dangerous. Electricity can "arc" or

Never cut or trim a tree near a power line. Call BPA!

"flashover" from wires, through the air, to trees or equipment, where it can cause fires, injuries or even fatalities to anyone near the tree or equipment. BPA will arrange to remove these trees.

Available uses of BPA-owned land

Although BPA acquired most of its transmission line rights-of-way as easements, some of BPA's transmission lines are constructed on property BPA owns in fee. BPA also has fee ownership of most of its substation sites as well as other properties BPA acquired to meet its responsibilities. There are three possible options if you wish to use land that BPA owns in fee. You will need to fill out BPA's Land Use Application so that we can determine whether your proposed use interferes with BPA's use. Easements may be granted for permanent uses such as private road crossings or utilities. Leases may be granted primarily for agricultural purposes on occupied or vacant BPA property. Nontransferrable Land Use Agreements may also be granted for use of BPA's fee owned property. Current market value of the land is the basis for the consideration for these transactions.

Information resources

For more information, including regional realty specialist contacts, or access to BPA's electronic Land Use Application form visit BPA's Web site at: *www.transmission.bpa.gov/LanCom/Real_Property.cfm*

Should you have any questions or would like assistance in completing the application, please call 1-888-836-6619. A BPA realty representative will return your call within two business days.

DOs and DON'Ts

BPA does not permit any use of rights-of-way that are unsafe or might interfere with constructing, operating or maintaining our facilities. These restrictions are part of the legal rights BPA acquires for its rights-of-way. Even when no transmission line has been constructed on the easement area, BPA's rights are maintained for future use. You can avoid or minimize incurring redesign or removal costs and benefit from developing reasonable construction schedules by being aware of the prohibited uses and by applying early in your planning process to BPA for concurrence.

DO call BPA before planting, digging or constructing.

DO check your property and review your property records for transmission right-of-way easements.

DO take the time to plan projects that conform to proper use of the rights-of-way which includes completing a BPA Land Use Application form.

DO comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement provided by BPA for your safety.

DO consult with BPA when planning subdivisions. Backyards and BPA rights-of-way are not compatible.

DON'T cut or trim a tree near a power line. Call BPA!

DON'T plant, dig or construct in BPA's right-of-way without first contacting BPA and filling out a BPA Land Use Application.

DON'T store equipment, materials, waste, flammable material or anything that would cause a fire hazard or other safety issue or impede access by line crews to towers and lines.

Vandalizing BPA property is a crime.

Please report any vandalism or theft to BPA property to the Crime Witness Program at 1-800-437-2744. Cash rewards of up to $25,000 will be paid to those providing information that leads to the arrest and conviction of persons committing the crime.

Bonneville Power Administration

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Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621