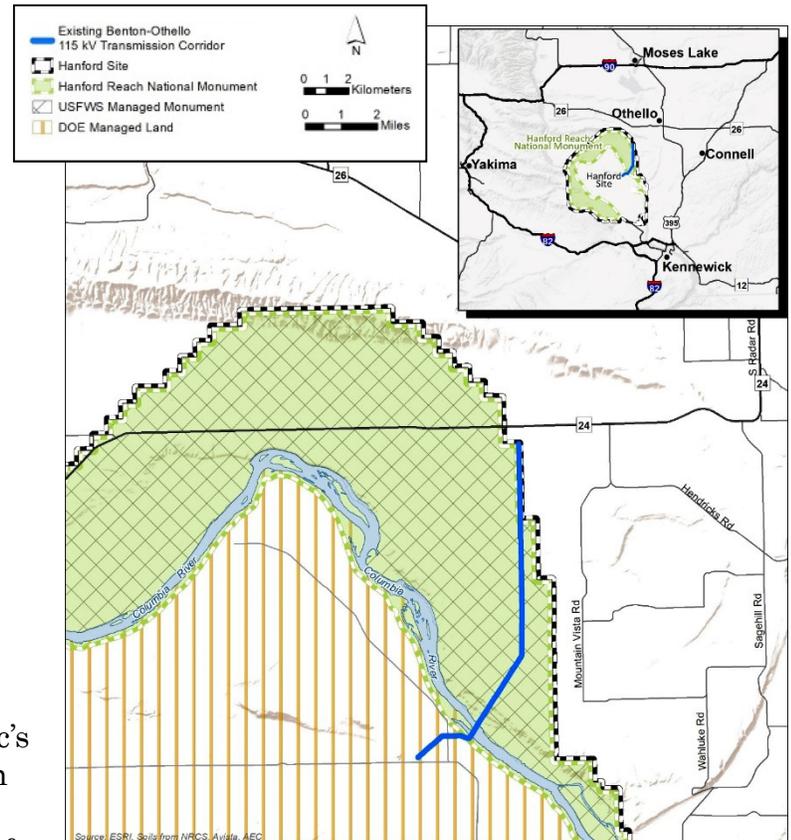


PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Draft Environmental Assessment for Avista Utilities Benton-Othello Electrical Transmission Line Rebuild Project on the Hanford Site, Washington

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is providing a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for public review. The Draft EA assesses potential environmental effects of Avista Utilities' proposal to rebuild 12.6 miles of its electrical transmission line on the Hanford Site.

DOE requests comments on the environmental analyses in the Draft EA, including the issues that are considered, the potential impacts that are identified, and the proposed mitigation measures.



Scoping Process

Public scoping was conducted to obtain the public's input regarding topics and concerns to address in the EA. During scoping, DOE received, and subsequently considered, comments from members of the public, agencies, and tribes. Most of the comments addressed natural and cultural resources, visual effects, and the NEPA process.

Background

Avista Utilities, a privately held company, is proposing to rebuild and upgrade its 115-kilovolt wood-pole Benton-Othello Switching Station (Othello) transmission line. The 12.6-mile transmission line traverses a DOE-owned and managed portion of the Hanford Site and the Columbia River (~2.9 miles in length) and also passes through a DOE-owned and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-managed portion of the Hanford Reach National Monument (~9.7 miles in length). The majority of the work would occur within the existing easement for the transmission line.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

May 29 to June 11

Submit comments by
June 11 to:

NEPA Document Manager
Benton-Othello EA
U.S. Department of Energy
P.O. Box 550, Mailstop H5-20
Richland, Washington 99352



Or email comments to
AvistaTranLineEA@rl.gov



Purpose

The purpose and need for Avista to rebuild its existing transmission line include the following:

- Minimize potential future structure failures, as the majority of the poles on this line are 10 to 30 years older than the design life.
- Maintain the reliability of the local transmission system by increasing the conductor capacity and reducing thermal overloads.
- Reduce fire risks to Avista's existing electrical system and the environment.
- Meet transmission system public safety and reliability standards set by the National Electrical Safety Code and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation.

Environmental Analyses

The Draft EA analyzes the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposal for subjects including land use, biological resources, including endangered species, water, wetlands, floodplains, cultural resources and historic properties, Manhattan Project National Historical Park, visual quality, and waste management. The analysis also considers cumulative environmental effects and identifies potential mitigation measures to reduce or avoid impacts.

How to get involved...

The 14-day public comment period for the Draft EA is from May 29 to June 11.

Please submit comments by June 11 to:

NEPA Document Manager
 Benton-Othello EA
 U.S. Department of Energy
 P.O. Box 550, Mailstop H5-20
 Richland, Washington 99352



Or email:
AvistaTranLineEA@rl.gov

Electronic access to the Draft EA can be found in the Public Information Repositories listed below or on the Hanford NEPA website at <https://go.usa.gov/xmpse>.

Hanford Public Information Repository Locations

Richland

U.S. Department of Energy Public Reading Room
 Washington State University, Tri-Cities
 Consolidated Information Center, Room 101-L
 2770 University Drive
 Richland, WA 99352
 Attn: Janice Scarano
 (509) 375-3308

Spokane

Gonzaga University
 Foley Center Library
 East 502 Boone Avenue
 Spokane, WA 99258
 Attn: John Spencer
 (509) 313-6110

