

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Umatilla Electric Cooperative 230kV Line at Morrow Flat/Longhorn

Project Manager: Joe Cottrell – TERR-TRI CITIES RMHQ

Location: Morrow County

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 – Multiple Use of Power Line Rights-of-Way

Description of the Proposed Action: Umatilla Electric Cooperative (UEC) has requested a 100-foot wide easement to place a section of their new 230kV steel pole transmission line across BPA's Morrow Flat Substation property, the (future) Longhorn Substation property, and transmission line rights-of-way to accommodate future load growth (LURR 20170069). UEC would build approximately one mile of transmission line consisting of six 50-foot high steel monopole structures and associated insulators, hardware, and conductor and access roads. The proposed work would occur on BPA-owned land surrounding the Morrow Flat Substation and (future) Longhorn Substation, and would cross under BPA's McNary-Morrow Flat No. 1 and 2 lines and McNary-Coyote Springs No. 1 line. Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, and work trucks. All work would take place within the 100-foot wide easement area. All disturbed areas would be restored at the end of the project.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Douglas F. Corkran

Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 18, 2019

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Umatilla Electric Cooperative 230kV Line at Morrow Flat/Longhorn

Project Site Description

The proposed project will be conducted on BPA-owned property at the the existing Morrow Flat Substation property, at the (future) Longhorn substation property, and across an existing transmission line right-of-way located approximately four miles east of the town of Boardman, Oregon in the BPA Tri-Cities District. The project area is flat agricultural land with low ground cover. A large portion of the property is actively cultivated. The land use in the surrounding area is also agricultural.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area has been surveyed multiple times in the last 9 years. No cultural resources were identified during any of the surveys. The area has been previously disturbed by construction and agricultural activities. Based on these surveys and the fact that the majority of the work would be happening in previously disturbed areas, the Oregon SHPO concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on March 12, 2019.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation; and the appropriate local, state, and Federal agencies. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Ground-disturbing activities proposed as part of this project would involve installing steel poles, access road construction, and some trenching. The proposed work would not significantly impact geology and soils.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no federal/state special-status plant species in the project area.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status wildlife species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: The project is located in a dry upland area. No in-water work is proposed for this project and there are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. Best management practices would be used during construction to prevent sediment from migrating off site during ground-disturbing activities.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Installation of steel pole transmission structures and trenching would not affect groundwater or aquifers.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: The land is currently used for agriculture and transmission facilities. No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be minor changes to the visual quality of the area as a result of the installation of a new transmission line; however, BPA transmission line structures and other utility structures exist immediately adjacent to the project area with similar visual characteristics. No residences or other sensitive viewing areas are located near the project area. The addition of the transmission line would not create a significant change to visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project would have no significant impacts on air quality; small amounts of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some minor temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours as the project is being constructed. There are no residences or other sensitive areas nearby that would be disturbed by construction noise.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. A site-specific health and safety plan would be prepared and implemented to address any hazards during the proposed work. Project activities or the existence of the new transmission line would not impact human health or safety.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary: NA

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary: NA

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary: NA

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: All activities would take place on BPA-owned land within the Morrow Flat and (future) Longhorn substation properties. UEC would contact any potentially affected adjacent landowners.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on any environmentally sensitive resources.

Signed: /s/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: March 18, 2019