

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Burns Radio Site Building and Telecommunications Upgrades

Project Manager: Vincent C. Majors – TEPF-CSB-2

Location: Harney County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to do architectural, mechanical, electrical, and telecommunications upgrades at the Burns Radio Site. The work is needed to accommodate equipment additions and personnel safety.

Architectural building upgrades would occur to internal and external walls, flooring, fixtures, site entry fencing, entry doors, the site yard, and signage. Upgrades would include removing internal walls to create larger spaces to accommodate future equipment and personnel safety, new paint and weather stripping, increased security and energy efficiency, energy efficient fixtures, leveling floors, encapsulating asbestos floor tiles, and leveling and fully rocking the yard for better vehicle maneuverability.

Mechanical building upgrades would include installing two HVAC AC units with electric strip heaters and associated structure support on outside building wall, smoke detectors, hydrogen and propane sensors, alarms, and an ice shield. These upgrades would improve safety and allow functioning of existing and future equipment additions.

Electrical building upgrades would occur to breaker panels, alarm systems and conduit, lighting wiring, the grounding system within the building, power outlets, and other electrical conduit.

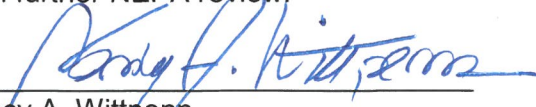
Telecommunication upgrades would include removing a microwave grid, installing two microwave antennas with associated wave guide, a waveguide bridge and waveguide entry port in the building wall including a new ice bridge connection, new ground bus bar on outside of same wall, and telecommunication equipment, cable tray rack/wiring and other racks inside the building.

All work would be done within the existing building or in the existing yard. Space exists within the fenced yard to deliver and stage materials, and complete the work in the yard. No expansion to the fenceline would be needed.

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, Jul. 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.



Nancy A. Wittpenn
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange
Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 10, 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: Burns Radio Site Building and Telecommunications Upgrades

Project Site Description

The Burns Radio Site is located in Harney County, Oregon, about 3 miles northwest of Hines, Oregon; Township 23S, Range 30E, Section 26. The BPA fee-owned site is surrounded by Bureau of Land Management-managed land. At about 5200 feet in elevation, the area is remote, dry most of the year, but gets heavy snowfall in the winter causing limited access during this time. The site is surrounded by shrub-scrub vegetation. No vegetation, except a few weeds, grows within the existing yard. The existing yard is fenced, relatively level, and rocked.

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> All project work would take place within the existing fenced yard. Because the area has been heavily disturbed by initial site development, the likelihood of intact subsurface deposits is very low. In addition, the radio site was constructed in 1981 and is outside BPA's period of historic significance. BPA's historian and archaeologist have determined that this project will have no affect on historic properties. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office agreed with this determination on September 12, 2019. The Confederation Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation agreed with this determination on August 15, 2019. BPA did not receive a response from the Burns Paiute Tribe.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The area within the fenced yard is relatively level and has been heavily disturbed by initial site development. Local areas of excavation would occur for equipment replacement and then backfilled after work is completed. In addition, a new layer of rock would be applied to the yard, further leveling the work area and preventing sediment from moving off-site during construction and post-construction. No impacts to geology would occur. Temporary impacts to soil would occur but since the area is level, previously disturbed, and a new level of rock would be applied, no long-term impacts to soil moving off-site would occur.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The area within the yard contains a few scattered weeds which would be covered with a new layer of rock. No impacts to plants or other vegetation would occur.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species are documented in the area nor were they observed during a site visit. Impacts could occur to wildlife in the general area from noise generated during construction but these potential impacts would be temporary and would likely not permanently drive wildlife from the area.</p>		

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



Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish occur within the fenced yard or in the surrounding area. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish would occur.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands occur within the fenced yard or in the surrounding area. No impacts would occur to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Excavation within the yard would not be deep enough to affect groundwater or aquifers that might be in this location. No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are expected.

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



Explanation: Proposed actions are consistent with the existing use of the site. No specially-designated areas exist at the site or in the general area. No impacts to land use or specially-designated areas would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Proposed actions are consistent with the existing use of the site and no expansion of the site would occur. No impacts to the existing visual quality of the surrounding area would occur.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary impacts to air quality might occur from small amounts of dust generated during construction but a portion of the road to the site is paved and another layer of rock applied to the site would minimize any dust that might occur.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise would occur during construction. The site is remote and at high elevation with no surrounding neighbors. Noise could impact wildlife in the area (see Wildlife above) but these impacts would be temporary and would likely not permanently drive wildlife from the area.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts are expected to human health and safety. The contractor would follow their safety plan. Excavated material that is not backfilled would be tested and disposed of in an approved facility. Material within the control house was tested for asbestos and would be disposed of as required by law.

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:

- 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:

- 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: Excavated material that is not backfilled would be tested and disposed of in an approved facility. Material within the control house was tested for asbestos and would be disposed of as required by law.

- 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The Burns Radio Site is owned in fee by BPA. No additional notification to other landowners is needed.

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

Signed:  Date: 10/16/2019
Nancy A. Wittpenn, ECT-4