

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY20 Pasco District Priority Pole Replacements

**PP&A No.:** 4363

**Project Manager:** Meadow Nelson

**Location:** Benton, Franklin, Walla Walla Counties, Washington and Umatilla and Union Counties, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace deteriorating wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on 5 different transmission lines in the Pasco district.

See table below for structure names and locations on the transmission lines.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State
Connell Tap to Benton – Scootenev #1	5/8	13N	31E	3	Franklin, WA
Franklin-Hedges #1	4/3	8N	30E	9	Benton, WA
Franklin-Walla Walla #1	36/4	7N	35E	22	Walla Walla, WA
McNary-Roundup #1	10/1	4N	29E	18	Umatilla, OR
Roundup-La Grande #1	23/7	1S	35E	11	Umatilla, OR
	27/9, 27/10, 28/7	1S	35E	36	Union, OR
	32/8, 33/1	2S	36E	16	

Replacement would be in-kind and would utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger would be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement. Work areas would be about 50 feet by 50 feet at each of the structure replacement locations.

Access road maintenance would be limited to minor blading, grading, and rocking of access road segments that have become impassable. All road maintenance would take place in the existing road prism.

Structures being replaced are in easements on privately-owned property and National Forest lands (Umatilla National Forest and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest). These structures are located within or adjacent to residential properties, pastures, dry land wheat farming, forest lands or similar type land uses.

The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

**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.

*/s/ Shawn L. Barndt*  
Shawn L. Barndt  
Tri Cities RMHQ

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 31, 2020

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

cc: (w/ enclosures)  
T. Cossairt – TFPF-Tri Cities RMHQ

# 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:** FY20 Pasco District Priority Pole Replacements

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## Project Site Description

Structures being replaced are in easements on privately-owned property and National Forest lands (Umatilla National Forest and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest). These structures are located within or adjacent to residential properties, pastures, dry land wheat farming, forest lands or similar type land uses.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> WA DAHP concurred on November 26, 2019. OR SHPO concurred on December 30, 2019 (above ground) and January 10, 2020 (archaeology). The Nez Perce replied on December 13, 2019, stating that they will defer to the CTUIR on this project. The CTUIR, Wanapum and Yakama Tribes were consulted, but did not respond during the 30-day period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area would be secured, and OR SHPO/DAHP and the environmental project lead must be notified.</li><li>Crews and equipment are to use existing access roads to and from each work site.</li><li>Limit access road maintenance to the existing road prism.</li></ul>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance (50x50 foot areas); erosion control measures would be used.</p>		
<b>3. Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. Area of disturbance is frequently disturbed by agricultural operations.</p>		
<b>4. Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed by minor noise during pole installation activities. No special-status species or designated habitat present. Area is previously disturbed by agriculture and road development.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)



Explanation: No water bodies present in project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: None present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No wells or use of groundwater proposed. Spill prevention measures would be present on site. Maximum depth of ground disturbance would be 10 feet.

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



Explanation: Temporary agricultural impacts during construction; landowners would be compensated for crop damage, as needed.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: New wood-poles would not be noticeably different than existing poles.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary and small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction. Dust would be of minor concern due to the timing of construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions. The proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

### **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:

- 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:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Coordination with property owners has occurred. No concerns have been expressed.

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

Signed: */s/ Shawn L. Barndt*  
Shawn L. Barndt, Tri Cities RMHQ

Date: January 31, 2020