

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 Mile 12 Impairment project

Project No.: 4403

Project Manager: Dianne Wilson - TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Sherman County, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to remedy an impairment to a transmission line crossing within the DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 transmission corridor between structures 12/5 to 12/7. The DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 transmission line violates BPA's required wire-to-wire clearances between transmission lines with the double circuit transmission lines, Slatt-Buckley No. 1 and Ashe-Marion No. 2. The proximity of these crossing wires creates a safety concern due to possible flashover events, a reliability concern due to possible unscheduled outages, and a compliance concern due to violation of BPA's design standards. An impairment is an area where the distance from the conductor to another object, in this case another transmission line, is inadequate, per National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards, resulting in a threat to line reliability and posing a risk to public health and safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure the line meets current NESC and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) standards.

The impairment remedy would include rebuilding three existing transmission tower structures on the DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 transmission line (12/5, 12/6, and 12/7) and adding an additional structure between the existing structures 12/5 and 12/6. The relocated DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 transmission line structures would be shifted about 60 feet to the northeast from the existing alignment.

The work area would be accessed via existing access roads and no access road work would be required. The equipment needed complete the work would include line, bucket, and boom trucks, drilling equipment, and possibly dozers, backhoes, and front loaders.

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/ Treicia Albert

Treicia Albert
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange July 15, 2020
NEPA Compliance Officer

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: DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 Mile 12 Impairment project

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located on private land with the existing DeMoss-Fossil No. 1 structure 12/7 sitting just inside the boundary of Bureau of Land Management managed land. The project is located in northern central Oregon along a mountain ridge made up of mostly rocky surface with sparse vegetation. There are no wetlands or waterways in the proposed project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Prineville District, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on March 7, 2019. Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via letters dated 3/28/19 (above-ground) and 4/10/19 (archaeology). BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on May 4, 2020 and OR SHPO concurred on May 15, 2020. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

- An Inadvertent Discovery Plan would be distributed and discussed with all construction personnel prior to construction.
- The part of site 35SH293 outside of the APE would be fenced off for protection prior to construction.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project area consists of mostly solid rock. Erosion control measures and best management practices would be used. Any disturbed areas would have additional rock added as needed and if any vegetated areas are disturbed they would be reseeded with a suitable seed mix to stabilize the area.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. The project area would not impact any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.

Project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species or common wildlife. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project and there are no floodplains or water bodies present with the proposed work area. Erosion control measures would be used to prevent off-site sediment migration. There would be no effect to water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the surrounding area of the project site. The minimal disturbance associated with the proposed project would be contained on site and best management practices would be used during construction to prevent sediment from migrating off site during ground-disturbing activities.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground excavation would not be to a depth that would intersect ground water. Best management practices would be used during construction to prevent sediment from migrating off site during ground disturbing activities and to keep concrete washout in designated areas.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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. There would be no effects land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The rebuilt and new structures would not appreciably change the appearance of the project area. There would be no change to the visual quality of the area as a result of the proposed activities.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor vehicle and equipment emissions are expected during construction. Some dust emissions may also occur during construction. The emissions would be minor and temporary. No impacts to air quality are expected from the proposed project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operations noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

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 would not impact human health and 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: 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: 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: 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: All activities have been coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work. The Bureau of Land Management has been notified of the project details with no comments received.

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

Signed: /s/ Treicia Albert

Date: July 15, 2020