

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Big Eddy - Demoss No. 1 Wood Pole Replacement

PP&A No.: 4341

Project Manager: Robert Yurst – TELP-TPP

Location: Wasco County, Oregon.

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace 12 deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on the Big Eddy -DeMoss No.1 transmission line between line miles 14 and 15. 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. Blading and re-shaping of existing landings and access roads may be required within the existing road prism to allow for safe working conditions. Road maintenance would be performed using an excavator or similar equipment.

The project 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/ Fred Walasavage

Fred Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Date: September 23, 2020

Katey Grange
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: Big Eddy-DeMoss No.1 Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement

Project Site Description

The project activities would be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights of way. The sites are located on state, Federal and private lands. Adjacent land uses primarily consist of agriculture and range. The project area is a mix of flat and gently sloped lands with periodic small canyons. Vegetation consists of steppe shrubs and grasses.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Big Eddy-DeMoss No.1	14/3, 14/4, 14/5	1N	15E	24	Sherman, OR	Private/Agricultural
	14/6,	1N	15E	25		State/Fish and Wildlife
	14/8, 14/9, 14/10, 14/11	1N	15E	25		Private/Agricultural
	15/1, 15/2, 15/3	1N	16E	30		BLM/Range
	15/4	1N	16E	30		Private/Agricultural

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Oregon SHPO, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on May 11, 2020. The CTWSRO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via a letter dated May 27, 2020, and Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the APE via a letter dated June 4, 2020. BPA sent a no effect to historic resources determination on August 5, 2020. The CTWSRO provided concurrence with the determination in an email dated August 13, 2020. No other responses were received within 30 days.

Note:

Make an explicit Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) for human remains, items of cultural patrimony, and intact archaeological deposits available to workers in advance of Project

implementation; construction crews should be trained/briefed on the contents and importance of the IDP.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would require minimal ground-disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, species within the project area. No vegetation removal is expected; however, any disturbed areas outside of 15 feet from the poles would be reseeded.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, species and habitats were identified within the project area. No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species. Wildlife in the project area would experience temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise levels and construction vehicle presence.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in project area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No contact with groundwater. The proposed work is in an upland area; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 10 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use and no specially-designated areas identified.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: New wood poles would be similar to existing structures and would not be noticeably different than existing structures.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No long term impact and construction noise would be temporary and localized.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. 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: N/A

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

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The BPA Realty Specialist sent project notice letters to landowners in May of 2020.

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

/s/ Fred Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: September 23, 2020