

Categorical Exclusion Determination
Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Swan Valley - Teton No. 1 and No. 2 Access Road Maintenance and Urgent Cross-arm Replacement

PP&A No.: 4663

Project Manager: Joseph Barnett – TFIF-Idaho Falls

Location: Bonneville County, Oregon and Teton County, Wyoming

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) proposes to replace cross-arms on the Swan Valley - Teton No. 1 transmission line on structure 10/1 and structure 29/4 on the No. 2 transmission line. The project would reinstall cross-arms and would not require structure replacement. The work would include the use of bucket trucks, work trucks, and trailers. The proposed work is necessary to ensure power grid reliability.

Accessing the project work area to perform the replacement would require improving approximately 1,200 linear feet of existing access roads. This would include blading off fallen rocks and debris and improving any heavily eroded areas. Road maintenance would also include improvement of landings if necessary. General equipment used for this type of roadwork includes: graders and/or bull-dozers. The access road improvements would preserve and repair the existing road, maintain roadway safety, and manage stormwater run-off.

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/ Frederick Walasavage
Fred Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: June 10, 2021
Sarah T. Biegel
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: Swan Valley - Teton No. 1 and No. 2 Access Road Maintenance and Urgent Cross-arm Replacement Project

Site Description

The project area is located on United States Forest Service lands (Caribou National Forest, Idaho and the Bridger – Teton National Forest, Wyoming). Nearby land uses include timber management and recreation. Vegetation within the right-of-way corridor is maintained as a low-growing plant community of mainly grasses and small shrubs.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: This project was reviewed by both a BPA Archaeologist and Historian. According to the BPA Archaeologist in a memo dated June 9, 2021, there would be no potential for effect from the project and no further review under the National Historic Preservation Act is needed. If project changes are required or new ground-disturbing or restoration activities (including new staging areas, access road improvements, or vegetation management), then further review under Section 106 including consultation and field inventory may be necessary.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plants are present. Project activities would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species were identified within the project area. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited to the already impacted transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the transmission line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected in the long term.

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. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission system rights-of-way and access road.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission system and to maintain power delivery 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: BPA Realty notified the USFS Caribou National Forest, Idaho and the Bridger – Teton National Forest, Wyoming on May 12, 2021. No concerns were expressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Frederick Walasavage

Frederick Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: June 10, 2021