

Categorical Exclusion Determination
Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY-19 Redmond-Brasada, Redmond-Pilot Butte, Big Eddy-Redmond, LaPine-Chiloquin, Pilot Butte-LaPine, Canby Tap, and Brasada-Harney Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement

PP&A No.: 4078

Project Manager: Meadow Nelson – TEP-TPP1

Location: Wasco, Deschutes, Klamath, and Jefferson Counties, Oregon. Modoc County, California

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 perform in-kind replacement of wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along selected transmission lines in the Redmond TLM District. The proposed action would reduce the risk of outages and safety concerns caused by downed power lines. Additionally, the proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

Replacement poles would be placed in existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augured to assure proper depth placement.

Maintenance along existing access road prisms and landings would be performed where necessary to facilitate safe access. Access road maintenance may include blading, shaping, rocking, and construction of water bars and drain dips.

The proposed pole replacement would be done using conventional utility line and construction equipment and techniques.

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
Frederick Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: May 3, 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: FY-19 Redmond-Brasada, Redmond-Pilot Butte, Big Eddy-Redmond, LaPine-Chiloquin, Pilot Butte-LaPine, Canby Tap, and Brasada-Harney Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement

The project activities would be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights-of-way. The sites are located on Forest Service, BLM, city, and private lands. Adjacent land uses primarily consist of forest management, 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
Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1	36/4	5S	15E	6
	39/5, 40/1, 40/3, 40/6, 40/7, 42/6, 43/6, 43/8	6S	15E	7, 20, 29
	56/4	8S	15E	5
	60/6, 61/6	9S	14E	24, 26
	68/7	10S	14E	28
	76/6	11S	14E	31
	85/9	13S	13E	14
	94/2	14S	13E	19
Redmond-Brasada No. 1	5/3	15S	13E	33
	7/5, 8/7	16S	13E	10, 13
	11/7, 12/2	16S	14E	29
Redmond-Pilot Butte No. 1	4/10	15S	13E	32
	5/1, 6/4, 7/3, 7/6, 7/7, 8/1, 8/3, 8/6, 8/7, 9/4, 9/8	16S	13E	5, 7, 18, 19, 30, 31
	11/7, 13/6	17S	12E	12, 24
Brasada – Harney No. 1	2/1	16S	14E	33
	16/7	19S	15E	3
	18/4	19S	15E	11
	18/7, 18/8	19S	15E	12
	20/5	19S	15E	18

	20/7	19S	16E	17
	31/2, 31/3, 31/6/, 32/1,32/5	20S	17E	11
	43/6	21S	19E	4
	48/5, 49/6, 50/1, 50/2, 50/4	21S	20E	20, 21
	55/1, 60/2, 60/3, 61/5, 61/6, 61/7 62/1	22S	21E	13, 17, 18
	73/5	23S	23E	12
	76/7	23S	24E	16
	80/9, 85/2	23S	25E	24
	86/3,87/1, 87/3, 88/4	23S	26E	19, 20, 21
	99/2, 80/9, 101/4, 102/7, 103/2, 103/3, 103/4, 103/6	23S	28E	26, 27, 28, 30
	105/1	23S	29E	30
	108/2	23S	29E	34
	110/2	23S	29E	35
	113/1,	24S	30E	5, 4, 9
LaPine-Chiloquin No. 1	1/4	22S	11E	19
	5/8, 9/1	23S	10E	25
	10/6, 11/6, 12/1, 12/3, 12/7, 13/1,13/8, 15/7	24S	10E	10, 15, 16
	22/8, 24/2,	25S	9E	21, 29
	28/6, 28/8, 32/8, 33/1	26S	08E	29
	40/2	27S	8E	31
	41/2, 41/8	28S	8E	6, 7
	44/1	28S	7E	24
Canby Tap	7/4	42N	9E	23
Pilot Butte - LaPine No. 1	5/2, 5/3, 7/2	18S	12E	23
	11/8, 12/3, 12/6,	19S	12E	20, 29
	20/7, 21/3, 21/6	20S	11E	33, 34
	23/4	21S	11E	9

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: For the replacements proposed in Oregon, on February 2, 2021, BPA submitted a determination of No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties to the Oregon SHPO, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Oregon Department of State Lands, Burns Paiute Tribe, The Klamath Tribes, and Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. No response was received from the Oregon SHPO within the 30 day required review period. Given the determination of No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties, the BPA archeologist gave indication to proceed on March 7, 2021. Structures 18/4, 18/7, 18/8, 20/5, 73/5, 76/7, 105/1, and 110/2 on the Brasada-Harney transmission line were not included in the original survey. The BPA archeologist conducted research and indicated there are no previously recorded sites around these structures and that the cultural surveys would be conducted after the construction. Additional consultation and an official Section 106 initiation letter would be issued at that time.

For the replacements proposed in California, on February 1, 2021, California SHPO provided its concurrence with the determination of No Adverse Effect. No response was received from other consulting parties.

In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; SHPO; and the appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All wood pole replacements would be in-kind and be placed in the same location as the existing poles. Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements, landing improvements, and 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 be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. No concerns about sensitive plant species were expressed by public land managers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species present. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected. No concerns about sensitive wildlife species were expressed by public land managers.

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: Project areas are located in uplands and project activities do not have the potential to impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

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 line right of ways. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in-kind and in the same location.

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. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

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 line 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 would notify and coordinate with the landowners/managers in advance of the construction of the proposed project. The BPA realty specialist has been in contact with multiple BLM offices and the USFS was given advance notice of the project in February 2021.

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 - EP-Celilo
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: May 3, 2021