

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Wireless Upgrades at Lookout Mountain Radio Station

Project Manager: Chuck Wedick – TELP-TTP-3

Location: Whatcom County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow T-Mobile to make upgrades to antennas and associated equipment on a structure and in a shelter at the Lookout Mountain Radio Station. Work on the structure would include replacing four antennas, installing four remote radio units, installing hybrid cable, and removing all coax and tower mounted amplifiers. Additional work would occur inside a shelter and would include installing new racks, junction boxes, batteries, and routers. No ground disturbance would occur and existing access roads would be used. Equipment used would likely include pickup trucks, a bucket truck, and hand tools.

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/ Kali Levy

Kali Levy
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Portland State University

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol Leiter

Carol Leiter
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange October 6, 2021

Katey C. Grange Date
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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is in the Lookout Mountain Radio Station in Whatcom County, Washington (Township 37 North, Range 3 East, and Section 13). The site fenced and graveled. The surrounding area is remote and forested.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA historian review of the proposed project actions found no potential to cause effects to historic properties. A memorandum stating this was issued on October 3rd, 2021.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance associated with this project.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: No special-status plants are known to be in the project areas. Access to the site is provided by a BPA road. Plants would not be impacted.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project location is not located within or adjacent to critical habitat areas. However, the surrounding area contains suitable habitat for two species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act: marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) and northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). The project would not impact any potential habitat, but would temporarily increase noise in the area. Marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl are most sensitive to sound during nesting periods, which are respectively April 1st to September 23rd and March 1st to September 30th. Project work occurring outside of the nesting periods would have no effect on either species.

Any local wildlife in the area may temporarily be temporarily be disturbed by noise generated from project work.

Notes:

- If any active nests are found on the structures prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.
- To avoid any potential effects on marbled murrelet or northern spotted owl that may be present in the area, project work should be completed between October 1st and February 28th, which is outside of the nesting periods for either species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is not located in or near water bodies.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is not located in or near wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance associated with this project.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change of land use. The project site houses existing communications equipment.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The appearance of the project site would have minimal change to the existing conditions.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety standards would be followed during project work. The project would not create conditions that would increase risk to 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: 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 project actions would occur on BPA fee-owned land.

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

Signed: /s/ Kali Levy

Kali Levy, ECT – 4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Portland State University

October 6, 2021

Date