

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Potholes-Grand Coulee Transmission Line Impairment Remedy

**PP&A No.:** 3,926

**Project Manager:** Meadow Nelson

**Location:** Grant 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 three impairments along the Potholes-Grand Coulee No. 1 Transmission Line within BPA's Wenatchee District. An impairment is an area where the distance from the conductor to the ground surface 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.

At two of the three locations, BPA proposes to install wood pole H-frame prop structures below the transmission lines to boost the conductors farther from the ground. At transmission tower 14/1, the prop structure would be installed 928 feet (ft.) Ahead on Line (AOL) of the tower. At transmission tower 39/5, the prop structure would be installed 663 ft. AOL of the tower. Proposed prop structure installation work would utilize the following type of equipment: line truck, auger truck, and tractor trailer.

At the third location near transmission tower 63/3, BPA proposes to excavate 1,150 cubic yards of soil from under the transmission line conductors; the soil would be spread evenly along low-lying portions of the right-of-way, stabilized and seeded, or disposed of properly off site. Proposed excavation work would utilize the following type of equipment: excavators, bull-dozers, and dump trucks.

**Table 1. Impairment Remedy Location**

Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership	USGS Quad Name
Potholes-Grand Coulee				
14/1	T20N R27E Section 5	Grant, WA	State	Grant Orchards
39/5	T24N R29E Section 27	Grant, WA	Private	Hawthorne SW
63/3	T28N R30E Section 27	Grant, WA	Private	Electric City

**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, July 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/ Michelle Colletti*  
Michelle Colletti  
Physical Scientist

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *February 19, 2019*

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:** Potholes-Grand Coulee Transmission Line Impairment Remedy

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### Project Site Description

The three proposed impairment remedies are located in eastern Washington, within shrub-steppe habitat and rangeland, on private and state lands.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA conducted cultural resource field surveys for the proposed project. The literature review identified the Potholes-Grand Coulee No. 1 Transmission Line within the APE. The Potholes-Grand Coulee No. 1 Transmission Line was designed and constructed by BPA in 1975. The transmission line has been owned and operated by BPA since energization. As outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) for BPA's Pacific Northwest Transmission System (Kramer 2012), Potholes-Grand Coulee No. 1 Transmission Line meets minimum eligibility requirements. No other cultural resources were identified within the APE during the literature review or the field survey. BPA sent letters of determination that the project would result in a no adverse effect on historic properties to the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) on December 18, 2018. BPA received DAHP concurrence on December 18, 2018. The CCT concurred with the determination on December 18, 2018.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All disturbance areas and any exposed soil would be stabilized and seeded. The areas, then, would be monitored until final stabilization is established.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No federal/state special-status plant species are present within the project areas.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No federal/state special-status wildlife species are present within the project areas. There would be minimal potential disturbance to wildlife in the vicinity from the noise generated or the vehicular traffic to and from sites.</p>		

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



Explanation: There are no federal/state special-status species, water bodies, or flood plains found within the project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands found within the project areas.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. Project would not result in any groundwater withdrawals nor provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No specially designated areas would be impacted by the projects. All areas of disturbance would be stabilized and seeded at completion of the project.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Minimal and insignificant changes to the visual quality would occur as a result of the proposed project work.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to project work.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would greatly reduce the risk of transmission line outages 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, if necessary:

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

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA Realty would make the necessary landowner notifications.

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

Signed: /s/ Michelle Colletti  
Michelle Colletti  
Physical Scientist

Date: February 19, 2019