

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Clark PUD Underground Utilities Easement

Project No.: 20180363

Project Manager: Ryan Tanner—TERR-3

Location: Clark County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to grant an easement to Clark Public Utilities District (PUD) for the installation of an underground power distribution line. The proposed Clark PUD line would be perpendicular to BPA's North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 & No. 2 transmission lines. The distribution line is currently overhead, and connected to two poles in the right-of-way (ROW). The area of ground disturbance for installing the underground line would be 2 feet wide by 3 feet deep by 270 feet in length. The pole in the center of the ROW would be removed, while the pole nearest the main road would remain, but the guy wires would be removed. The guy wires are anchored by helical screws and would either be cut below grade, or removed. After removal of the pole, the remaining hole would be backfilled with gravel.

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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 12, 2019

Attachment: 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: Clark PUD Underground Utility Easement

Project Site Description

The project is located in Clark County, Washington, along Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) North Bonneville-Ross-No. 1 & No. 2 transmission lines, near tower 28/2 in Section 30, Township 2 North, Range 3 East. Vegetation within the project site consists of non-native grasses and is in agricultural production. The parcels adjacent to the site are in agricultural use. The surrounding area is a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential development. A large 200 acre rock quarry is located south of the project area. The nearest waterbody to the project area is Lacamas Creek, located approximately 0.75 miles to the east. No wetlands were identified within the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Consultation with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historical Preservation (DAHP) was initiated on October 26, 2018. On October 29, 2018, DAHP concurred with the proposed area of potential effect (APE) map. BPA cultural staff determined that the project would have no adverse effects to historic properties and notified the consulting parties of this determination on January 29, 2019. DAHP concurred with the determination on January 29, 2019. The Cowlitz did not respond.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would involve trenching to a depth of three feet. Excavation areas would be backfilled upon installation and Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented to prevent erosion of soils.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area consists mainly of non-native grasses, with no special-status plant species or habitats present within the project area. Therefore, there would be no impact to federal or state special-status plant species.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status wildlife species or habitat present within the project area; therefore, there would be no impact to federal or state special-status wildlife species.</p>		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not have any waterbodies, floodplains, or listed fish species. There would be no impact to these resources.</p>		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands present in the work area. The soils at the site are non-hydric, and the project area does not exhibit wetland hydrology or vegetation. There would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not impact groundwater or aquifers, as the maximum depth of disturbance would be 3 feet and would not intersect the groundwater table.

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



Explanation: The proposed project would not change land use at this location, nor would specially designated areas be impacted.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The removal of the overhead distribution line would slightly improve the visual quality at this location.

10. **Air Quality**



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**



Explanation: There are two residences adjacent to the project area; one is located 25-feet southeast and the other is 225-feet southwest from the project location. Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operation noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impacts 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, 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The utility right-of-way (ROW) is BPA fee-owned. Adjacent landowners and ROW easement leasees would be notified of the upcoming project by BPA. Additionally, the Land Use Agreement would direct Clark PUD to coordinate with landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger
Beth Belanger, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: March 12, 2019