

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: New and Replacement Structures on Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 and East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1

Project No.: P02996

Project Manager: Cynthia Rounds, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Douglas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace two existing transmission line structures with new structures (Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 structure 32/5 and East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 structure 1/1), install one new transmission line structure (East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 structure 1/2), and install two new disconnect switches (one on each previously mentioned transmission line) for the purpose of sectionalizing those two transmission lines to increase transmission grid safety and reliability.

The new and replacement transmission structures would be 2- or 3-pole wood H-frame structures, up to 75 feet tall and embedded up to 10 feet deep in the ground. Each structure would have up to 6 anchored guy wires. The replacement structure, 32/5, would be constructed under the existing transmission line and the existing conductor would be connected to the new structure after installation. New conductor would be strung between the 1/1 replacement structure and the new 1/2 structure. Counterpoise grounding rods would be installed up to 10 feet deep in the soil immediately adjacent to the new transmission line structures.

Within about 20 feet of structures 32/5 and 1/2, new lattice steel disconnect switch structures would be installed. Each switch would be approximately 10 feet wide, by 20 feet long and 20 feet tall. Jumper cables would drop from the existing transmission line and connect to each switch.

To accomplish this proposed work, soil and vegetation disturbance may occur within the existing BPA corridors; however, equipment staging would be confined to the gravel access road prism (no new soil or vegetation disturbance associated with staging areas). Upon project completion, an area about 30 feet radius from the new disconnect switch structures may be covered with new gravel. All disturbed vegetated areas would be restored upon project completion.

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/ *Becky Hill*

Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ *Doug Corkran*

Doug Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist, ECT

Concur:

/s/ *Katey Grange*

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *September 24, 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: New and Replacement Structures on Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 and East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1

Project Site Description

The project area is in Douglas County, Washington and located in T29N R25E Sec 25, about 1.5 miles southeast of the town of Bridgeport. The work area associated with structure 32/5 is located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands, while the work area associated with structure 1/1 is located on private property, both within existing BPA rights-of-way. In this relatively flat and dry landscape, the area is primarily sagebrush steppe and grassland habitat, with some irrigated agriculture crops. There is evidence of cattle grazing; there are no residences or buildings within half of a mile of the project area. There are no waterbodies, floodplains or fish habitat within 0.5 mile of the project area and no wetlands within 0.4 mile of the project area. The Chief Joseph dam on the Columbia River is located about 0.5 mile north and Foster Creek and associated wetlands are located about 0.4 mile west of 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA initiated Section 106 consultation on July 3, 2019, with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), BLM Spokane District, and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.</p> <p>On August 21, 2019, the BPA archaeologist determined that the proposed undertaking would have no adverse effect to historic properties. On that same date, the DAHP and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation responded that they concurred with the BPA archaeologist's determination. The BLM concurred on August 23, 2019 with the determination that the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected.</p> <p><u>Note:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Should cultural materials be encountered during the implementation of the project, work shall halt, and the stipulations of the Inadvertent Discovery Plan should be implemented. The BPA archaeologist should be notified immediately.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to avoid or minimize erosion or sedimentation impacts to surrounding areas.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of any plants listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would have No Effect on ESA-listed plant species.</p> <p>Vegetation that would be impacted by this project include: big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), spineless horsebrush (<i>Tetradymia canescens</i>), an <i>Aster</i> species, and various native and non-native grasses.</p> <p><u>Note:</u></p>		

- To prevent the potential introduction or spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles and equipment would be cleaned before entering the project area. A BLM-approved weed-free certified grass seed mix will be used to revegetate disturbed areas upon project completion.

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



Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of wildlife species listed under the ESA in the project area, nor is there any designated critical habitat in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would have No Effect on ESA-listed wildlife species or designated critical habitat.

Wildlife in the area would be accustomed to the operational noise and presence of a transmission line; therefore, the proposed project would not affect wildlife.

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



Explanation: The proposed project would not have an effect on waterbodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The proposed project would not have an effect on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater is proposed.

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



Explanation: No specially-designated land uses are present in the project area. The project activities would be consistent and compatible with land uses within and adjacent to the project area.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All work would be completed within the existing BPA right-of-way. The new and replacement structures would be consistent of the current condition and would not change the visual quality of the project area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area during construction activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary increase in noise would occur during construction activities.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impact to human health or 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: BPA coordinated with the BLM during project design to obtain necessary permissions for BPA activities on BLM land; and private landowners will be contacted by the Realty Specialist prior to performing work on private land

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill

Date: September 24, 2019

Becky Hill

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC