

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2020 Covington District Priority Pole Replacement Project

PP&A No.: 4337

Project Manager: Meadow Nelson, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Pierce 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) proposes to replace 2 wood pole transmission structures along the South Tacoma-Southwest No. 1 230-kV transmission line with new wood poles. Structures 1/7 and 2/4 poles will be replaced in the same location as the ones removed. In order to safely access the pole replacement for 1/7, BPA proposes to construct an access road approximately 1,550 feet in length beginning near structure 1/5 and extending to 1/8. Project work includes blading, shaping, grading and adding rock, minor vegetation removal around structure landing, crane operations, and minor auguring of existing pole location to allow placement of new pole. All work would occur within BPA's ROW on existing access roads and landings. General equipment used for this type of project would include excavators, cranes, and dump trucks.

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/ Chad Browning

Chad A. Browning
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Office

Date: January 7, 2020

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

Proposed maintenance activities would be located in a segment of the South Tacoma-Southwest No. 1 transmission line, immediately surrounding structure 2/4 and between structure 1/5 and 1/8 just north of Frederickson, WA. Current land use within the project area consists of utility line corridor right-of-way and includes dirt access roads, wood pole transmission structures, and associated electrical lines. Adjacent land use primarily consists of rural and urban residential with islands of undeveloped land. Topography within the project area is generally sloping from the south to the north with elevations above mean sea level (AMSL) ranging from approximately 442 feet near structure 1/5 to 327 feet near structures 2/4. Clover Creek is located more than 650 feet to the north of structure 1/8. Biologists from Turnstone Environmental Consultants, Inc. located the presence of three wetlands that lie within the project area between structures 1/6 and 1/7 on August 13, 2019.

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 archaeologist conducted a cultural resource investigation for the project area and submitted a report to the Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) and affected tribes on October 22, 2019. No cultural resources were identified during the survey. DAHP provided concurrence on a Determination of No Historic Properties Affected on October 25, 2019.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, BPA would stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; DAHP; and the appropriate local, state and Federal agencies. BPA would implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering, and take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would occur within the existing road prism (1,550 feet long by 16 feet wide), two wood pole replacements, and at two landings (1,600 sq. ft. each). Due to wet soil conditions, work would occur during the dry season (May-September). Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Vegetation removal would be limited to those areas within the disturbance footprint of the reconstructed access road, landings, and immediately around the two structures to be replaced. No Federal or state special-status plant species are mapped within the project area. All areas of soil disturbance would be reseeded.</p>		

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



Explanation: No suitable habitat is present in the project area for listed or sensitive wildlife species. Low-quality habitat typical of the area would be disturbed.

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



Explanation: Work in this area would not encroach closer than 600 feet of Clover Creek. In addition, erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent downstream sedimentation.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Access road work would occur within 5 feet of the delineated wetland, however proper BMPs would be installed prior and during construction to ensure no impacts to wetlands occur. No work would occur within any wetland.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of ground water proposed.

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



Explanation: No land use changes are proposed; no specially-designated areas have been identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All new construction would be at ground level and are limited to existing road prisms and the area immediately surrounding the transmission lines. Wood poles would be replaced in current location. Access roads and transmission poles would visually match existing infrastructure.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar air quality impacts during project construction are expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise from typical utility line equipment would be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. In fact, the proposed action would help reduce outage times 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project area is located on privately owned land, which BPA holds an easement on. Property owners would be notified prior to construction.

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

Signed: /s/ Chad Browning Date: January 7, 2020
Chad Browning, EPR-COVINGTON
Environmental Scientist