

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2020 Snohomish District Priority Pole Project

PP&A No.: 4445

Project Manager: Tina Edwards

Location: Snohomish County, Washington

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 seven deteriorating wood pole structures (Snohomish-Murray 5/1, 8/3, 11/8, 15/2; Murray-Custer 4/3, 4/5, 4/7) and remove one (Murray-Custer 4/6) along with associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along the Murray-Custer No. 1 and Snohomish-Murray No. 1 230 kV (kilovolts) transmission lines. Replacement of wood pole structure would be within the same location as current wood pole and match existing structures. Structure 4/6 on Murray-Custer would be removed completely and structures 4/5 and 4/7 would be raised approximately 15 feet to span a wetland where 4/6 is located. New landing construction or access road development is not planned at these locations.

All work would be completed between the July 1 to October 15th timeframe.

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 Browning
Environmental Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange Date: June 16, 2020
Katey C. Grange 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

Proposed maintenance activities would be confined to the area immediately surrounding eight structures and completely within the ROW of the Murray-Custer and Snohomish-Murray transmission lines. The replaced structures would be located in various locations along 1 mile within the Murray-Custer transmission line and is located approximately 1 mile east/northeast of Arlington, WA. For the Snohomish-Murray transmission line, the replaced structures would be located in various locations over an about 10 mile area from approximately 3.8 miles east of Everett, WA to approximately 2.5 miles northeast of North Marysville, WA. Land use in the surrounding area consists of County-managed, undeveloped rural, and private residential land. Elevation (above mean sea level) within the project area ranges from approximately 70 to 440 feet.

Structures 4/3, 4/5, and 4/7 would be in or near delineated wetlands. Structure 4/3 is within 200 feet of an unnamed tributary to the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River. There are no waterbodies within 600 feet of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA archaeologists conducted a cultural resource investigation for the project area and submitted a survey report to the Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) and affected Tribes on January 24, 2020. BPA received DAHP concurrence on a Determination of No Historic Properties Affected on January 30, 2020. BPA did not receive responses from other consulted parties within the 30-day period.

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.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would require minimal ground-disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federal or state special-status plant species are recorded in the project area. Placement of wetland matting would have minimal and temporary impacts of crushing vegetation to non-sensitive vegetation. Vegetation in ground disturbance would be removed, but would be reseeded upon completion.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Disturbance would be localized to the area immediately surrounding the structures to be replaced and work at each location would last no longer than two days. Therefore, there would be minimal temporary disturbance impacts to non-sensitive wildlife species. Some of the project areas encompass USFWS suitable habitat for Oregon spotted frog. However, BPA crews would not be driving through any flooded roadways, nor would any work occur within standing water or impact surface hydrology. All work would be completed between the July 1 to October 15th timeframe. Therefore, the project would have no effect to ESA-listed species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No work is anticipated to occur within standing water or near waterbodies. Additionally, construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented throughout the project to ensure localized soil disturbance does not cause sedimentation issues into any waterway.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work around structures 4/3, 4/5, and 4/7 would be in or near delineated wetlands. Work is planned for the dry season to avoid potential impacts to wetlands and all wetland boundaries would be clearly marked prior to work commencing. BPA crews would utilize wetland matting within all delineated wetlands to avoid impacts. No equipment or work would occur in wetlands unless wetland matting is properly installed and no ground disturbance would occur in wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed pole replacement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of groundwater proposed.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Replacement of wood pole structure would be within the same location as current wood pole and match existing structures. Structure 4/6 on Murray-Custer would be removed completely and structures 4/5 and 4/7 would be raised approximately 15 feet to span a wetland where 4/6 is located.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

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: 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: Notification letters will be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to the affected landowners prior to work.

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

Chad Browning, EPR-Covington Date: June 16, 2020