

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sammamish-Maple Valley Reconductoring

PP&A No.: 4181

Project Manager: Lisa Casey – TEPL TPP-1

Location: King County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance Activities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace the conductor and associated hardware on the Sammamish-Maple Valley No. 1 line between structures 16/2 and 18/2. This is because multiple trees have fallen on the conductor since it was installed, causing damage. To accomplish this, BPA proposes to establish pulling and tensioning sites back on line of structure 16/2 and ahead on line of structure 18/2. These would be cleared of vegetation, leveled, and rocked as necessary. Grounding equipment would be placed in the rock under the equipment to protect workers in the event that the line is energized. To accomplish this, BPA would utilize line trucks, light-duty trucks, boom trucks, bulldozers, dump trucks, trailers with spools of conductor, and specialized equipment to tension the conductor once it is installed.

There are several public road and foreign utility lines crossing underneath the Sammamish-Maple Valley corridor in the proposed work area. To prevent the conductor from falling in the unlikely event that it is dropped, BPA would need to install temporary guard structures at each of these crossings. To accomplish this, two poles would be temporarily installed on each side of a crossing, along with a cross-member that would catch the wire in the event of it falling. Once the project is complete, the poles and cross-members would be removed and the holes would be back-filled. This work would include the use of a vactor truck, line truck, back-hoe, dump truck, boom truck, and light-duty 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/ Aaron Siemers
Aaron Siemers
Physical Scientist

Concur:

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

Date: April 26, 2021

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: Sammamish-Maple Valley Reconductoring

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in King County, WA. The surrounding area is a mix of Washington residential houses and King County public parks.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A cultural resources survey and Section 106 consultation were completed for the project APE. No resources were identified in the immediate vicinity of the proposed work areas. Washington DAHP agreed with a no effects determination from a survey report; on 02/17/2021, Log No.: 2021-11-08738-BPA. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological resources (BPA and WA DAHP) would be contacted.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. Stormwater BMPs would be used as needed during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. No special-status species are present. A survey conducted in February 2019 by BPA employees confirmed no presence of special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. No special-status species are present. A survey conducted in February 2019 by BPA employees confirmed no presence of special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work would be required. Appropriate stormwater BMPs would be used during the project as needed to control runoff or erosion. Work areas would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. A no effect determination addressing ESA-listed aquatic species and essential fish habitat was completed for the project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands occur at or within the area of influence of the work sites. A field visit in February 2019 by BPA employees confirmed that no wetlands occur in the area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. Any spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project locations are within existing transmission line rights-of-way and would not change existing land uses.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed improvements are consistent with the surroundings and would not significantly change the existing visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project has a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would only occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known hazardous conditions are known. Completion of this project would increase system stability and reliability to the service area.

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: Underlying and surrounding landowners would be notified and coordinated with in advance of the proposed project. A meeting with landowners was conducted in November 2019 to review the proposed design and provide feedback.

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Siemers
Physical Scientist-EPR-4

Date: April 26, 2021