

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Black Mountain Radio Station Tower Acquisition

Project Manager: Jay Largo, TPCV-TPP-4

Location: Boundary County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B.1.24 Property Transfers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to acquire ownership of a radio tower located at Black Mountain Radio Station within the Kaniksu National Forest near Bonners Ferry, Boundary County, Idaho (Township 61 North, Range 2 East, Section 30). The radio tower is currently owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and an existing lease that allowed BPA to maintain and operate very high frequency (VHF) two-way radio equipment on the tower has expired. Therefore, BPA would acquire ownership of the tower to continue operating the existing radio equipment, which is essential for field personnel safety and to ensure reliable power transmission. Additional rights to operate and maintain the radio tower that USACE originally acquired from the underlying landowner, United States Forest Service (USFS), would also be transferred to BPA.

The acquisition would not require any ground disturbance and would not result in any modifications to existing facilities. The Black Mountain Radio Station tower acquisition is in support of BPA's larger Mobile-Radio Essential Data Infrastructure (MREDI) program.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel April 4, 2022

Sarah T. Biegel

Date

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.

Proposed Action: Black Mountain Radio Station Tower Acquisition

Project Site Description

The radio tower is located at Black Mountain Radio Station on USFS property within the Kaniksu National Forest near Bonners Ferry, Boundary County, Idaho (Township 61 North, Range 2 East, Section 30). No on-the-ground work at Black Mountain Radio Station would be required.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The USACE radio tower at Black Mountain Radio Station was constructed in 1975 and as such is not considered a historic resource. The proposed undertaking would not require any ground disturbance that could affect archaeological resources. Therefore, the proposed undertaking would have no potential to cause effects to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies or floodplains and would have no effect on fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact noise levels.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is a radio tower acquisition only. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact 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: 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: BPA has been coordinating the radio tower acquisition with USACE and USFS, which own the radio tower and the underlying property, respectively. No other landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette April 4, 2022
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC