# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

**Proposed Action:** Bell-Addy No. 1 Transmission Line Switch Replacements and Structure Reconfiguration

**Project No.:** P04335

**Project Manager:** Rusty Ludt, TEPL-TPP-1

**Location:** Spokane County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities; B1.24 Property transfers

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace disconnect switches at structures 9/4, 9/7, and 11/2 and to reconfigure transmission structures 9/4 to 9/8 and structure 11/2 on the 115-kilovolt (kV) Bell-Addy No. 1 transmission line in Spokane County, Washington. The existing disconnect switches are obsolete, making it difficult to sectionalize associated non-BPA transmission lines. The reconfiguration of structures 9/4 to 9/8 and around structure 11/2 would reduce congestion and ease access constraints for maintenance vehicles and equipment.

In Line Mile 9, all five existing transmission structures from structure 9/4 to structure 9/8 as well as two existing disconnect switches (B-210 currently mounted on structure 9/4 and B-211 currently mounted on structure 9/7) would be removed. The existing structures consist of one to three wood poles, some of which are guyed. Four new transmission structures would be installed, reducing the overall structure count by one; there would no longer be a structure 9/8. The new transmission structures would be installed in approximately the same locations, although the exact locations of some structures may shift by up to approximately 25 feet ahead-on-line (AOL) or back-on-line (BOL). One new standard disconnect switch mounted on a new steel lattice switch stand would be installed adjacent to structure 9/4 and a second disconnect switch and switch stand would be installed adjacent to structure 9/7. Approximately 900 feet of Bell-Addy No. 1 would be reconductored from the existing structure 9/3 to the new structure 9/7 (approximately 2,700 feet total of new conductor). To continue service to non-BPA transmission lines during construction, a temporary wood monopole shoofly structure near structure 9/5 would be installed. The shoofly structure would be removed following completion of the structure replacements.

In Line Mile 11, the existing steel monopole transmission structure 11/2 and the two existing phase-over-phase disconnect switches (B-1829 and B-1830) that are currently mounted on the structure would be removed. Two new three-pole transmission structures would be installed: one approximately 50 feet AOL from the current structure 11/2 and the other approximately 150 BOL from the current structure 11/2 on the south side of West Half Moon Road. A new standard disconnect switch mounted on a new steel lattice switch stand would be installed adjacent to each new transmission structure. A non-BPA wood three-pole transmission structure currently located between Bell-Boundary No. 3 and Bell-Addy No. 1 would be relocated approximately 80 feet west of Bell-Boundary No. 3 and one new non-BPA transmission structure would be constructed

approximately 50 feet southeast from the current structure 11/2. The new non-BPA structure would have jumpers to Bell-Addy No. 1. It is likely that existing conductor would be reused; although short segments of new conductor could be spliced in, if required.

Existing structures would be removed by excavating around the bases of the poles and lifting the poles out of the ground. Existing guy anchor rods could be cut approximately 1 foot below the ground surface and the remaining in-ground portions retired in place, or the entire guy anchor could be excavated. Any remaining holes would be backfilled to ground level with clean backfill material, and excess soil would be dispersed onsite. New transmission structures would be similar in height to the existing structures, could consist of one to three poles, and could be constructed of wood or steel, depending on supply availability. The majority of new transmission structures would be guyed and installed via direct embed; although some steel transmission structures may be mounted on concrete foundations to accommodate structure loads. Latchways fall protection would be installed on new structures, where required.

Construction is expected to be carried out in three phases from 2024 through 2026, with each phase requiring approximately 10 working days to complete. Standard transmission line construction vehicles and equipment would be used to complete the proposed action, such as a boom truck, bucket truck, backhoe, truck-mounted auger, pulling and tensioning equipment, and light-duty work trucks. No access road improvements or site preparation (i.e., grading or graveling to establish landings, materials and equipment staging areas, etc.) would be required. The proposed action would temporarily disturb up to approximately 4.0 acres and would permanently disturb approximately 0.1 acre. New temporary or permanent easements would be acquired, if required.

**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.

WILLIAM STINNETTE

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Walker Stinnette
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

KATEY GRANGE

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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.

**Proposed Action:** Bell-Addy No. 1 Transmission Line Switch Replacements and Structure Reconfiguration

## Project Site Description

The project site encompasses two distinct areas within BPA's existing 115-kV Bell-Addy No. 1 transmission line right-of-way: between structures 9/3 to 9/8 (Township 27 North, Range 43 East, Section 6) and near structure 11/2 (Township 27 North, Range 43 East, Sections 6 and 7) in Spokane County, Washington. Ground disturbance would occur within previously-disturbed areas that are currently either covered in crushed rock with little to no vegetation, routinely mowed common grasses, forbs, and weeds, or under active cultivation. The Clayton, Phoebe, Hagen, Marblespring soil units are mapped within the project site, none of which are classified as hydric. No wetlands or water bodies are mapped within or near the project site. The project site is in a rural area, and surrounding land uses include residential properties interspersed with isolated stands of undeveloped forests and agricultural lands. The closest residential property is within 100 feet of the project site.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

### 1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On July 13, 2023, BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties:

- Coeur D'Alene Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)

BPA conducted background research and an intensive field survey of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). No previously recorded historic or cultural resources were located within the APE, and no new historic or cultural resources were identified during the field survey. Therefore on October 5, 2023, BPA determined that the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected (BPA CR Project No.: WA 2021 001; DAHP Log No.: 2023-07-04250-BPA). Concurrence with BPA's determination was received from DAHP on October 5, 2023 and from Spokane Tribe of Indians on October 10, 2023. No other comments were received.

Notes:

- Implement the Post Review Discovery Procedure in the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during implementation. Discontinue all ground-disturbing activity in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

## 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in up to approximately 4.0 acres of minor and temporary soil disturbance from excavation to remove and install transmission structures, switch stands, and the temporary shoofly as well as from soil compaction and rutting due to vehicle and equipment use. Installing new transmission structures and switch stands would permanently disturb approximately 0.10 acres of soil. Standard erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to prevent sediment migration off site. Temporarily disturbed soils would stabilize as vegetation is reestablished and would eventually return to near pre-existing conditions following completion of the proposed action. The proposed action would not impact geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would temporarily crush, strip, or bury up to approximately 4.0 acres of low-growing and common weeds, grasses, and forbs and agricultural crops. Installing new transmission structures and switch stands would permanently remove approximately 0.10 acres of vegetation. Standard construction BMPs would include revegetation with an appropriate seed mixture, if required. Temporarily disturbed areas would eventually return to near pre-existing conditions following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species, including plants listed under the Endangered Species Act, near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat would be impacted.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. It is expected that most species would be able to temporarily move out of the area during construction and then would likely reoccupy the site following completion of the proposed action. There would be no permanent impacts to wildlife habitat. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species, including wildlife listed under the Endangered Species Act, near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat would be permanently impacted.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are located within or near the project site. Standard erosion and sediment control BMPs would be implemented to prevent erosion and sedimentation from impacting any off-site water bodies and floodplains. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. Standard construction BMPs would be implemented to prevent erosion and sedimentation from impacting any off-site wetlands. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground excavation would not reach depths to ground water, and standard construction BMPs would reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action could temporarily and intermittently impact agricultural land uses within the project site due to blocked access and/or crop damage, and nearby residential properties could be temporarily and intermittently impacted due to construction noise. However, there would be no permanent land use impacts following completion of the proposed action. The project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of equipment and general construction activities, including vegetation disturbance, would cause temporary visual impacts. The new transmission structures and switch stands would be similar in size to existing structures; although the pole material could change from wood to metal. The final appearance of the project site would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area, and the project site is not located in a visually sensitive area.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would produce minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no permanent change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from the use of vehicles and equipment during construction, which could intermittently exceed current ambient conditions. Construction noise could be audible from nearby residential properties, some of which are within approximately 100 feet of the project site. Noise impacts would temporarily occur during each of the three, ten-day construction phases and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no permanent change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

**12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout implementation of the proposed action to minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to 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: The proposed action would occur in areas where BPA has acquired, or would acquire, easements from the underlying landowners. BPA would notify, involve, and coordinate with underlying and adjacent landowners, as necessary.

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

Signed: WILLIAM STINNETTE Digitally signed by WILLIAM STINNETTE Date: 2024.04.29 11:56:14 -07'00'

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