

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Winthrop Tap Modification

Project No.: P03058

Project Manager: Meadow Nelson – TEP-TPP-1

Location: Okanogan County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to loop its existing Winthrop Tap to Twisp-Okanogan 115-kV transmission line into Okanogan PUD's (OKPUD) Twisp Substation via OKPUD's rebuild of a portion of its existing Twisp-Okanogan 115-kV single-circuit transmission line to a new double-circuit line. One circuit of OKPUD's new double-circuit line would connect to structure 1/2 of the existing Winthrop Tap to Twisp-Okanogan line. This new connection would require the removal and replacement of structure 1/2 with a new H-frame wood-pole dead structure in the same location. The switch and platform at the base of the structure would permanently be removed. The existing guy wires, anchor rods, and plates would be re-used. The existing conductor would also be used to connect to the new OKPUD line. An existing access road would be used to access the site.

The new connection at structure 1/2 would complete the loop into OKPUD's Twisp Substation. Structure 1/1 would then be removed and the entire BPA line would be renumbered. OKPUD and BPA would retain ownership of their respective circuits.

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, July 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/ Nancy A. Wittpenn

Nancy A. Wittpenn
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Date: January 16, 2019

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: Winthrop Tap Modification

Project Site Description

The project site is located about a mile east of Twisp, Washington, on the east side of the Methow Valley at an elevation of about 1,800 feet. It is owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The site is flat, on rangeland, and contains a diversity of plant types including sage, grasses, and a number of flowering plants. An unnamed perennial stream is located about 120 feet to the northwest of structure 1/2 but it is not classified as a fish stream. The stream empties into a canal about 3,000 feet downstream and closer to the Methow River.

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"/>

Explanation: BPA's archaeologist and historian determined that this project has no potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources. On December 17, 2018, the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation concurred with this determination. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe concurred with this determination on December 18, 2018. The Washington Department of Natural Resources concurred with this determination on December 14, 2018.

Note: Treat potential discoveries of archeological materials with the 'inadvertent discovery' guidelines: Stop work, contact BPA ECT lead and BPA ECC archeologist for further notifications, and ensure integrity of site and materials until further instructions.

2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Explanation: The project site is flat; no landings and no blading would be needed. Vegetation would be crushed. Poles would be placed in the same locations. Existing guy wires and anchor plates would be re-used. No sediment would move off-site. No permanent impacts to soils or geology would occur.

Note: At structure 1/2, restrict work area back-on-line of this structure as much as possible to avoid any potential water quality impacts. Work area, vehicles, and the staging of materials and equipment will be restricted to a 50' x 50' work area surrounding each structure or on the existing access road. WDNR requested a specific seed mix with instruction for broadcast. Reseeding will occur by the transmission line maintenance crew or EPR (technical and region services) staff at the appropriate time as soon after construction as possible.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)

Explanation: The project site is flat. No temporary or permanent landings would be needed. Vegetation would be crushed to allow for quicker regeneration and retention of the seed bank. No special-status species or habitats occur at the project site. Reseeding would occur at the appropriate time as soon after construction as possible. No permanent impacts to vegetation would occur.

Note: See Geology and Soils above. In addition, use certified weed-free straw or mulch certified by the North American Weed Association. Use weed free as-needed gravel from a local gravel pit. Rinse vehicles before entering project site to minimize weed seed transfer and potential infestation.

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

Explanation: No impacts to wildlife would occur. No special-status species or habitats occur at the project site.

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

Explanation: An unnamed perennial stream is located about 120 feet to the northwest of structure 1/2 but it is not classified as a fish stream. The stream empties into a canal about 3,000 feet downstream and closer to the Methow River. See Geology and Soils above. No impacts would occur to this stream, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: An unnamed perennial stream is located about 120 feet to the northwest of structure 1/2. A wetland delineation was not done to determine presence of wetlands. Disturbance would occur well away from this area and sediment would not move off-site. See Geology and Soils above. No impacts to potential wetlands or wet areas would occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated.

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

Explanation: The proposed work is consistent with the existing land use. No specially designated areas exist in the project area.

Note: BPA Realty will contact WDNR regarding the construction schedule.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The proposed work would stay within the existing project footprint. One existing BPA tower would be permanently removed. No new visual impacts would occur.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: A temporary localized noise increase would occur during construction.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

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: BPA has coordinated with the underlying landowner, Washington Department of Natural Resources, during project planning and design. Realty will notify WDNR of the construction schedule.

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

Signed: /s/ Nancy A. Wittpenn
Nancy A. Wittpenn ECT-4

Date: January 16, 2019