

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell Substation Fence and Gate Project

Project Manager: Janice Grounds – TEPF-CSB-2

Location: Flathead, MT

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities.

Description of the Proposed Action: The existing fence line at Kalispell Substation is incomplete. The main gate is missing, so the public can walk up or drive up to the control house. It is necessary to install the main gate to avoid any security incidents. BPA proposes to install a 23-foot wide vertical pivot gate at the main entrance of the Kalispell Substation and approximately 20 feet of 7-foot tall chain link fence with concrete posts that connect to and match the existing fence, including a 10-foot wide swing gate (single leaf) adjacent to the main gate. A snow/ice melting system would be embedded in a new concrete slab beneath the gate opening to keep the gate system operable during inclement weather.

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/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: November 21, 2019
Sarah T. Biegel
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

The project site is located in the Flathead Valley, on flat ground surrounded by agricultural and suburban residential lands. An old channel of the Flathead River lies across a two-lane highway 200 feet to the north of the project area. The nearest residence is approximately 650 feet away from the project area.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA's archaeology department reviewed the project and determined that there would be no potential for adverse effects to cultural resources. BPA's historian reviewed the project and determined that the project would have no potential for adverse effects to any historic resources.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would be limited to areas that have been covered by gravel, asphalt, or concrete already. Some minor soil removal would occur where new fence posts would be installed. No impacts to geology and soils are expected from this project.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There is no vegetation in the proposed project area. No plants would be affected by the proposed project.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There is no wildlife habitat in the proposed project area. There are no documented occurrences of sensitive or listed wildlife around the project area. Construction activities would cause some levels of disturbance; however, these levels would be similar to existing disturbance from highway traffic, agricultural operations, and residences nearby. Thus, no impacts to wildlife are expected.</p>		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project sits approximately 200 feet south of the Flathead River floodplain which contains some old oxbow ponds. The minimal disturbance associated with the proposed project would be contained on site and no sediments or hazardous material releases are expected to be able to make it across the highway to this area. The project would not affect any floodplains, water bodies, or fish.</p>		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are some wetlands in the Flathead River floodplain 200 feet north of the project area. The minimal disturbance associated with the proposed project would be contained on site and no sediments or hazardous material releases are expected to be able to make it across the highway to this area. The project would not affect wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater is relatively shallow since the site sits within the Flathead River valley. However, the minimal disturbance associated with the proposed project would be contained on site, and the project area is hardened surfaces with little potential for any materials to pass through to groundwater or aquifers. The project would not affect groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: The project would not change existing land uses. The substation currently exists on site, and this project would only add a gate to an existing facility.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The addition of a gate and some fence would not appreciably change the appearance of the substation. The nearest sensitive viewing area (residence) is approximately 650 feet away. At this distance the addition of a gate would be barely visible against the existing fence and substation facility. No impacts to visual quality are expected.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Some minor vehicle and equipment emissions are expected during construction. Some very minor dust emissions may also occur during construction. The emissions would be minor and temporary. No impacts to air quality are expected from the proposed project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some noise would occur during construction from equipment and power tool use. The level of noise would be similar to the ambient noise created by other ongoing activities in the area, such as routine substation operations, vehicle traffic on the adjacent highway, agricultural operations, and residential yard care.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed project would not involve the use of hazardous materials beyond those typical to all construction sites, nor would it create conditions that would be hazardous to 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, 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: No landowner notification is needed since the project would take place entirely within BPA's substation property.

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

Signed: /s/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F. Corkran – ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: November 21, 2019