

**Categorical Exclusion Determination**  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Madison Substation Disconnect Switch Installation Project

**PP&A No.:** 4754

**Project Manager:** Bradford Morrison – TSE-TPP-2

**Location:** Gallatin County, Montana

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install a disconnect switch and supporting footing adjacent to Structure 18/5 of the Mack's Inn – Madison Transmission Line. Structure 18/5 is the first structure outside of the BPA Madison Substation. The transmission structure would be upgraded to a dead end structure and would require adding additional aboveground hardware and four guy wires with support footings. The plan is to use existing poles unless further assessment dictates otherwise.

The work would include the use of bucket trucks, work trucks, and backhoe during the time period of mid to late November of 2021. The proposed work is necessary to ensure power grid reliability.

**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/ Frederick Walasavage*  
Fred Walasavage  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*                      Date: November 29, 2021  
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.

**Proposed Action: Madison Substation Disconnect Switch Installation Project**

### **Site Description**

The project area is located on United States Forest Service (USFS) lands (Gallatin National Forest, Montana). Nearby land uses include timber management and recreation. Vegetation within the right-of-way corridor is maintained as a low-growing plant community of mainly grasses and small shrubs.

### **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

#### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist completed background research for the project APE and, in coordination with the Custer Gallatin National Forest, determined that the project would result in No Historic Properties Affected. One previously conducted cultural resources survey occurred within the APE and was determined to provide sufficient cultural coverage for the project in conjunction with the amount of previous disturbance within the APE. The determination letter was sent to the consulting parties on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The Montana SHPO concurred with the determination on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The BPA archaeologist then called the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation and the Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation and received verbal concurrence on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. For this project, an Inadvertent Discovery Plan would be put into place. Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the Environmental Protection Specialist should be notified immediately. No additional review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required for this action at this time.

#### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during switch and guy footing installation. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plants are present. Project activities would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) and Canada Lynx (*Lynx Canadensis*): It was determined that T&E listed species are not likely to exist within the project area during project implementation. No documented sightings have been recorded although such species may inhabit the area on an infrequent basis. The project would be short in duration and would not alter any significant amounts of existing habitat. Given the proposed project timeline of late November, it is unlikely that Grizzly Bears would be present. Therefore, it was determined that this project would have “No Effect” on these listed 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 is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission system rights-of-way.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission system and to maintain power delivery in the region.

### 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 Realty notified the USFS – Gallatin National Forest. No concerns were expressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Frederick Walasavage      Date: November 29, 2021  
Frederick Walasavage  
Environmental Protection Specialist