

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



**Proposed Action:** Brasada-Harney Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement

**PP&A No.:** 4078

**Project Manager:** Meadow Nelson – TEP-TPP1

**Location:** Harney County, Oregon

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform in-kind replacement of two wood pole structures (48/5 and 112/3) and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on the Brasada-Harney transmission line in the Redmond TLM District. The proposed action would reduce the risk of outages and safety concerns caused by downed power lines. Additionally, the proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

Replacement poles would be placed in existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augured to assure proper depth placement. Improvements to existing landings to include grading and gravel placement may be necessary.

The proposed pole replacement would be done using conventional utility line and construction equipment and techniques.

**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

Frederick Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 15, 2023

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:** Brasada-Harney Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement

The project activities would be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights-of-way. The sites are located on Oregon State Department of Lands and private lands. Adjacent land uses primarily consist of agriculture and range. The project area is a mix of flat and gently sloped lands. Vegetation consists of steppe shrubs and grasses. There are no waterbodies or wetlands within at least 300 feet of the work area.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure	Township	Range	Section
Brasada – Harney No. 1	48/6	21S	20E	20
	112/3	24S	30E	5

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

#### 1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Klamath Tribe, US Bureau of Land Management (Burns, Lakeview, and Prineville districts), US Forest Service (Deschutes National Forest, Fremont National Forest, and Crooked River Grasslands), Oregon Department of State Lands, on October 14, 2019. BPA received a response from SHPO on October 29, 2019. BPA also received responses from the Klamath Tribes on October 4, 2019, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon on October 17, 2019, and the Ochoco National Forest on October 22, 2019. BPA sent a determination on January 12, 2023, that included a determination of not eligible for site 35DS3083, no adverse effect to site 35HA4996, and an adverse effect to site 35WS518 which will be addressed in a separate MOA. BLM concurred on February 6, 2023. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Note:

- Pole replacement activities at BH 112/3 should be limited to the previously disturbed areas around the poles and the access road.

- In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; SHPO; and the appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.

## **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All wood pole replacements would be in-kind and be placed in the same location as the existing poles. Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements and landing improvements. 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 be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. No concerns about sensitive plant species were expressed by public land managers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species present. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be permanently affected. No concerns about sensitive wildlife species were expressed by public land managers.

## **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: Project areas are located in uplands and project activities do not have the potential to impact wetlands.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be consistent with existing land uses and 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 line right of ways. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in-kind and in the same location and would not result in a long-term change of the visual environment.

## **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. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

## **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 line 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 and coordinated with the landowners/managers in advance of the construction of the proposed project. This coordination has been on going since fiscal year 2018.

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  
Frederick Walasavage - EP-Celilo  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: March 15, 2023