

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Marion - Prospect Hill Radio Upgrades

**Project No.:** P05561

**Project Manager:** Jennifer Bachman - TEPF

**Location:** Marion County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine maintenance, B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers, B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities.

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace the 4 GHz digital radio equipment system from Prospect Hill Radio Station (PROH) to Marion Substation (MARN) through the Marion Passive Repeater in Marion County, Oregon. The replacement of the radio equipment is needed due to the current radio path being unreliable because of frequency interference and reflection potential. This project would install a 7/8 GHz radio system including 7/8 GHz antennas at PROH and MARN, replacing the current 4 GHz antennae at MARN and PROH. Radio equipment would be swapped out in the existing communications racks inside the existing communications rooms.

In addition to new radio equipment, the current MARN tower would be extended by 20 feet, adding an extension on top of the existing communications tower to provide adequate path clearance. The tower would be self-supporting and would not need any additional guying to support the height increase. In addition to the tower extension, the required latchway safety climb system would be installed on the towers at both MARN and PROH.

Construction would occur during the Fall of 2023 and crews would access each site using the existing road networks. Equipment used would include bucket trucks, a small crane, pick-up trucks, and various hand tools. Decommissioned radio equipment would be disposed of in approved facilities.

**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/ Nicholas Johnson

Nicholas Johnson  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel                      September 11, 2023

Sarah T. Biegel                      Date  
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:** Marion - Prospect Hill Radio Upgrades

## **Project Site Description**

The project locations are both in Marion County, Oregon. Marion Substation is located approximately 4.5 miles east of Stayton, Oregon. Prospect Hill Radio Station is located approximately 3 miles east of Independence, Oregon. Marion Substation is in Section 46 of Township 9 South, Range 1 East and Prospect Hill is in Section 24 of Township 8 South, Range 4 West. The project areas are located in rural areas surrounded by agricultural fields. Vegetation near the project areas consists of many grasses, shrubs, and trees that are endemic to the Willamette Valley ecoregion.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project was reviewed by a BPA archaeologist and it was determined that there is no potential to cause effects to historical or cultural resources. BPA archaeologists issued a no potential to cause effects on historic properties memorandum dated September 5, 2023.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Projects actions would not affect geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project actions would not affect plants. No Federal or state special-status species are known to occur within the project areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some species may temporarily avoid the area during the short construction window. There are no Federal or special-status species or habitats that would be impacted by the project actions.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish present within the project areas.

**6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands present within the project areas; therefore, there would be no effects to wetlands.

**7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions would not affect groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA project would not result in any land use changes. There are no specially-designated areas near the project locations.

**9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new tower structure at MARN would be slightly taller than the current height and would not result in a significant visual change. The project actions would not result in any substantial changes to the visual quality of the areas.

**10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no substantial changes to air quality during or after construction.

**11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change substantially.

**12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not affect human health or 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: BPA Realty staff would notify the underlying landowner of the Prospect Hill site and along routes of access along with adjacent landowners of the construction schedule. No other notifications would be required for the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Nicholas Johnson September 11, 2023  
Nicholas Johnson Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist