

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Umatilla Electric Cooperative 115-kV Line Construction

Project No.: LURR 20150035-Supplement 1

Project Manager: Joe Cottrell - TERR-Tri-Cities-RMHQ

Location: Morrow County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9: Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to grant an amendment to a Land Use Agreement (BPA Case No. 20150035, Morrow Flats Substation Site, May 13, 2015, Tract No. HNHR-SS-1) allowing Umatilla Electric Cooperative an easement on its (BPA) fee-owned transmission line right-of-way in Morrow County, Oregon. Within this new easement, Umatilla Electric Cooperative plans to construct a section of their new double-circuit 115-kV transmission line being built to serve growing loads and development in the county. The new crossing would be 100 feet wide for 590 feet and continue for 220 feet at 60 feet wide. The new double-circuit line would cross beneath three existing BPA lines:

- McNary-Morrow Flats No. 2 230-kV line between structures 17/3 and 17/4
- McNary-Morrow Flats No. 1 230-kV line between structures 17/3 and 17/4
- McNary-Coyote Springs No. 1 500-kV line between structures 17/3 and 17/4

Six steel H-frame and two steel monopoles would be constructed. No new access roads would be needed. The new structures would also hold fiber. All work would occur within the new easement.

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

Date: August 23, 2018

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 proposed site, on BPA existing right-of-way and adjacent to Lewis and Clark Highway in Morrow County, Oregon, is flat with a mix of exposed sandy soil, and native grass and weedy plant species. Crop circles surround the existing right-of-way. BPA's Morrow Flats Substation is located about 1600 feet to the southwest.

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 received concurrence with its no adverse effect determination from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on August 13, 2018. The Nez Perce Tribe indicated on July 17, 2018, that they would defer to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). No responses were received from the Yakama Indian Reservation and the CTUIR.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> In the event any archaeological or historic materials are encountered during project activities, the following actions will be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead and the BPA archaeologist. Appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Oregon SHPO, and the appropriate county, state, and Federal agencies should also be notified.• 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Steel and wood poles would be direct-embedded approximately 5-10 feet below the surface in sandy soils. Dead-end structures would have concrete pier foundations.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Use BMPs during and post-construction to minimize erosion and keep soil from moving off-site until successful reseeding can take place.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status plants species or habitat exist on or near the site. Weed surveys in 2014 revealed the presence of diffuse knapweed at the site and in the surrounding area. All disturbed areas would need to be successfully reseeded with a native seed mix as soon as possible after disturbance to minimize the spread of existing and other noxious weeds.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Wash vehicles before and after leaving the site daily to prevent spread of noxious weeds.</p>		

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



Explanation: No special-status wildlife species or habitats exist on or near the site. A 2014 survey for the Washington ground squirrel confirmed this area unsuitable habitat based on the high sand and low loam/silt content of the soil.

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



Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish occur on or near the site.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands occur on or near the site.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No obvious groundwater or aquifers exist on or near the site.

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



Explanation: The site is consistent with the existing utility land use and is not within a specially designated area.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The new easement would cross an existing BPA right-of-way that contains three operating high-voltage lines. The new line would not be out of character with the surrounding transmission lines and right-of-way.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: An increase in emissions from vehicles and construction equipment would be temporary and localized. Dust could be created during pole installation and stringing but would also be temporary and localized.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Ambient noise occurs in the area from passing motorists and trucks on adjacent Lewis and Clark Drive, and from farm equipment operating in close proximity to the site. Additional noise would be generated during construction but it would be localized and temporary.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: All soil not needed for backfilling the new structures would be disposed of appropriately by Umatilla Electric Cooperative. No hazardous or other substances harmful to humans would be generated by this project.

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 been notified through the LURR process.

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: August 23, 2018