

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fiber Optic Cable Replacement on the Grand Coulee-Chief Joseph No. 2 Transmission Line Project

Project No.: WA 2018 213

Project Manager: Desmond McPherson, EFWC-SICKLER

Location: Douglas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple Use of Transmission Line Rights-of-Way

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration proposes to replace damaged fiber optic cable between the control house at the Chief Joseph Substation and structure 33/5 via 33/6 on the Grand Coulee-Chief Joseph No. 2 transmission line. The new fiber cable would be installed overhead, and would be spliced into the existing BPA fiber vault near structure 33/5. No trenching or excavation activities are proposed with this project. Vehicles and equipment would access structure 33/5 via established two-track dirt access roads and structure 33/6 via graveled surfaces located within the Chief Joseph Substation yard.

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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Nancy A. Wittpenn

Nancy A. Wittpenn
Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Office

Date: August 30, 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 project area is located on BPA fee-owned property associated with the Chief Joseph Substation, in Douglas County, Washington. The substation is located in a relatively remote, unpopulated area about 1 mile south of the town of Bridgeport. Rolling hills dominate this local landscape, with open, undeveloped spaces and occasional agricultural crops intermingled within the sagebrush rangelands. The Chief Joseph Substation is located immediately west of HWY 17, and 0.5-mile south of the Chief Joseph Dam. The damaged fiber optic cable spans two transmission structures, one located within the Chief Joseph substation yard (structure 33/6), and the other located approximately 500 feet west of the substation's western chain link fence line (structure 33/5).

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> The BPA archaeologist reviewed the project description and previous archaeological studies in and around the Chief Joseph Substation on August 20, 2018. He determined that no historic properties would be affected as a result of the proposed undertaking; no additional review is required under the National Historic Preservation Act.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Project activities would cause minimal soil disturbance when vehicles use the established two-track dirt access roads to reach the work area near structure 33/5. No trenching or excavation is proposed with this project. No significant impacts to geology or soil are expected as a result of this project.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of any plant species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on ESA-listed plant species. Minimal and temporary disturbance to existing vegetation located in the dirt access road prism and surrounding structure 33/5 may occur (small shrubs and native and non-native herbaceous plants).</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of any wildlife species listed under the ESA in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on ESA-listed wildlife species.</p>		

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



Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish present within the project area; therefore, no water bodies, floodplains, or fish would be impacted by project activities.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project area; therefore, no wetlands would be impacted by project activities.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: All project activities would occur above the ground's surface; therefore, no impacts to groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: No specially designated areas are located within the project area, and no land use changes are proposed.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The existing fiber optic cable would be replaced in-kind; therefore, no significant changes to the visual quality of the area are anticipated.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and emissions would increase in the local area during project activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary noise would increase in the local area during project activities.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities do not present a risk of danger 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: The project activities would occur on BPA fee-owned property. No public involvement or coordination with external entities is necessary.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill
Becky Hill, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: August 30, 2018