

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sprint Burdoin Equipment Upgrade

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian—TELP-TPP-3

Location: Klickitat County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Sprint Corporation to upgrade their antennas and equipment on their existing site called Burdoin. The site is located on BPA's transmission tower, along the McNary-Ross No. 1 transmission line, in Section 28, Township 3 North, Range 12 East. Two existing antennas would be removed and replaced with two new antennas. Additionally, two remote radio heads would be installed on the antenna mounts, behind the new antennas. The existing coaxial cable would be removed and replaced with two hybrid cables. The coaxial cable would connect the antennas to the equipment in Sprint's equipment compound, located underneath the tower. The project does not involve any ground excavation.

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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Staffing & Recruiting

Reviewed by:

/s/ Nancy Wittpenn

Nancy Wittpenn
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 1, 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 site is in a rural area, on a hilltop, overlooking the Columbia River Gorge, near Lyle, Washington. There is an existing access road to the tower location. The nearest residence is approximately 0.20 miles north of the project site.

Vegetation in the project area consists of silver leaf phacelia (*Phacelia hastata*), lupine (*Lupinus* sp.), balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*), wild cucumber (*Echinocystis lobata*), biscuit root (*Lomatium nudicaule*), sulfur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*), yarrow (*Achillea millifolium*), and unidentified grasses.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA Cultural staff have reviewed the proposed project and determined that this type of activity does not have the potential to cause effects to historic or cultural properties.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project does not involve ground disturbance. Some insignificant compaction of soils may occur due to bucket trucks driving around the site.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> On May 4, 2018, an extensive plant survey was conducted to determine if any plants on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) list of Sensitive Flora were present at the project site. Two sensitive plant species were present at the site: deltoid balsamroot (<i>Balsamorhiza deltoidea</i>) and lupines that seem to be hybridized between <i>Lupinus latifolius</i> var. <i>thomsonianus</i> and <i>L. sulphureus</i> var. <i>subsaccatus</i> . The <i>Balsamorhiza deltoidea</i> is mostly concentrated on the slopes adjacent to the access road to the tower site; however, there are approximately five plants on the southwest side of the tower. The lupines are located along the slopes adjacent to the access road and there are also approximately 24 lupine plants around the base of the tower. These plants would be protected by requiring all construction vehicles to stay on the existing access road and work only at the base of the tower. Additionally, the work would be done in the fall of 2018 or winter of 2019, after the plants have senesced, which would allow for the preservation of the root system and a quick recovery from any unexpected incidental crushing that might occur.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or habitats are present at the project location. The project would have no impacts to special-status wildlife. If any active nests are found on the structure prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nest is unoccupied.		

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



Explanation: The project area does not have any water bodies, floodplains, or listed fish species; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project is not in or near wetlands; therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project does not involve any ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: The land use at the site would not change. The project area is zoned for small-scale agriculture within the CRGNSA. On August 13, 2018, a CRGNSA Management Plan consistency review application was submitted to the US Forest Service (USFS). The USFS responded on September 26, 2018, that no further review was needed. The project would have no impacts on land use or specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: In the spring of 2018, an assessment of potential impacts to CRGNSA Key Viewing Areas (KVA) was conducted. The antennas are only visible from the nearest KVA, County Road 1230, located 0.30 miles south of the tower. The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the utility corridor and would not impact visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



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

11. **Noise**



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

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impact 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 proponent is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger

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Date: October 1, 2018