

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Communications Site at Teton Substation

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Teton County, Wyoming

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) is proposing to allow T-Mobile to develop a telecommunications facility on BPA fee-owned property in Wilson, Wyoming. T-Mobile would collocate tower-mounted equipment on a BPA-owned 120-foot steel monopole communications structure located immediately south of the fenced BPA Teton Substation. In addition, T-Mobile would construct a new communications equipment shelter at ground level. Project activities would include:

- Installing six panel antennas, six remote radio units, and two hybrid coaxial cables on the monopole communications structure
- Constructing a ground level 10-foot by 10-foot communications equipment shelter anchored to a 10-foot by 20-foot concrete pad
- Constructing an ice bridge to protect and support coaxial cables between the monopole and the new equipment shelter
- Installing a cabinet with associated communications equipment as well as a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system inside the new equipment shelter
- Trenching approximately 40 feet north and then east from an existing transformer to the new equipment shelter to install electrical conduit at least 36 inches below grade

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 21, 2019

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: T-Mobile Communications Site at Teton Substation

Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property immediately south of the BPA Teton Substation fence line in Wilson, Teton County, Wyoming (Section 12, Township 41 North, Range 17 West). The project site is accessed via an approximately 1,150-foot unpaved access road, which extends north from Moose Wilson Road.

The project site is disturbed and of low ecological quality, with ground cover consisting of exposed soils and gravel and little to no vegetation. The closest water feature is an unnamed tributary of Fish Creek, which is located over 300 feet north of the project site. Another entity currently maintains communications equipment on the tower and an associated equipment shelter at the base of the tower. Teton Substation is located immediately north of the site, and privately-owned, low-density residential properties are located to the west. Undeveloped woodlands are located to the south, which open to shrub lands farther south. East of the site is a non-BPA-owned transmission line, with undeveloped woodlands and privately-owned low-density residences located farther to the east.

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 entire project area was previously surveyed by BPA in 2014, with no cultural resources identified. Because the project actions include grading and trenching in previously-disturbed and previously-surveyed areas, BPA has determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties. Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the Environmental Protection Specialist should be notified immediately. No further review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils within and around the project site were previously disturbed during construction of the Teton Substation, the steel monopole, the existing communications equipment shelter, and the access road. Minor soil compaction from vehicle and heavy equipment use would occur within the project area. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored on-site, backfilled, and graded to original contours following installation. T-Mobile and its delegates would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Project-related activities (e.g. vehicle and equipment use, soil grading, and trenching) could result in removal of vegetative cover in small areas where vegetation is present. No additional tree or vegetation removal is proposed. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.</p>		

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



Explanation: Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, no state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA are expected to occur at the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.

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



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any water bodies or floodplains. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status fish species or fish species protected under the Federal ESA. During and after construction activities, T-Mobile and its delegates would implement erosion and sediment control BMPs to prevent transport of sediment off-site.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped wetlands. T-Mobile and its delegates would implement BMPs for temporary erosion and sediment control to prevent sediment moving off site into any nearby wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Soil disturbance would not reach depths that would impact groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: Development of a new communications site is consistent with surrounding land uses (i.e. an electrical substation and a communications site). There would be no change to land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Constructing a new communications equipment shelter and adding equipment to the existing tower would not significantly change the visual quality of the area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area during construction. There would be no long-term changes in air quality following completion of the project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change significantly from current ambient conditions.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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 area is BPA fee-owned. Adjacent landowners and easement lessees would be notified of the upcoming project by BPA. Additionally, the Land Use Agreement would direct T-Mobile to coordinate with landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette
W. Walker Stinnette – EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Date: August 21, 2019