

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Verizon Rocky Flats Antenna 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 Verizon to upgrade their antennas and equipment at an existing site called Rocky Flats. The site is located on BPA's transmission tower, along the McNary-Ross-1 transmission line, in Section 28, Township 3 North, Range 12 East. The work would consist of removing three existing antennas and six remote radio units (RRU), and replacing those with six new antennas and six RRUs. Additionally, a hybrid coaxial cable and voltage protection equipment would also be installed on the tower. The new coaxial cable would connect the new antennas to the equipment in Verizon's equipment compound, which is 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, 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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Doug Corkran

Doug Corkran
Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 15, 2019

Attachments: Environmental Checklist
NE Memo

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 project is in Klickitat County, Washington, near the town of Lyle, Washington. The site is in Section 28, Township 3 North, Range 12 East. The majority of the host parcel is used as rangeland for cattle. The neighboring parcels are largely undeveloped, except for sporadic residential housing. The surrounding topography consists of undulating hills. Balch Lake is 0.25 miles south and the Columbia River is a mile south of the project location.

The project area is heavily grazed by cattle. Vegetation at the site consists of Gray's biscuitroot (*Lomatium grayi*), barestem desert parsley (*Lomatium nudicaule*), scorpion weed (*Phacelia hastata*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*) 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 and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No Federal/special-status species or habitats are present at the project location. The project would have no impacts to special-status plants. Some non-listed plants may be crushed during construction; however, these species are abundant in the ecoregion, and thus there would be no detrimental impacts to the regional population.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No Federal/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, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> 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 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). On May 30, 2019, a CRGNSA Management Plan consistency review application was submitted to the US Forest Service (USFS). The USFS responded on July 2, 2019, 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 2019, an assessment of potential impacts to CRGNSA Key Viewing Areas (KVA) was conducted. The antennas are not visible from any of the KVAs. 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. Operational 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
Beth Belanger, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: July 15, 2019