

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell TLM District FY18 Wood Pole Replacements

Project No. (if applicable): 3933

Project Manager: Sarah Hall – TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Deer Lodge, Flathead, Lake, and Missoula Counties, Montana

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to perform in-kind replacement of wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along several transmission lines. Replacement poles would be placed in existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augered to assure proper depth placement. Minor maintenance along existing access road prisms and landings would be performed where necessary to facilitate safe access. No unauthorized construction activities would occur in any water body including streams, ponds, or wetlands. Access road maintenance may include blading, shaping, rocking, and construction of waterbars and drain dips. Refer to the table below for project locations.

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County
Columbia Falls-Trego No. 1	9/6	T30N R21W SEC17	Flathead
	22/1	T31N R23W SEC2	
Garrison-Anaconda No. 1	22/8	T6N R10W SEC28	Deer Lodge
	24/1, 24/2	T6N R10W SEC33	
	26/5	T5N R10W SEC8	
	26/8	T5N R10W SEC17	
Hot Springs-Rattlesnake No. 1	38/3	T17N R20W SEC34	Lake
	38/9	T16N R20W SEC3	Missoula
	43/5	T16N R20W SEC25	
	45/4	T15N R20W SEC1	

The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Date: January 23, 2020

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

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: FY18 Wood Pole Replacement – Kalispell District

Project Site Description

Proposed routine maintenance activities would be conducted along the Columbia Falls-Trego, Libby-Bonnors Ferry, Garrison-Anaconda, and Hot Springs-Rattlesnake transmission lines located in Montana. Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-ways and access road easements, which are located in rural, non-developed areas and/or in rural, agricultural areas.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA initiated Area of Potential Effect (APE) consultation with the Montana Historical Society and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist. No cultural resources were identified during the survey and BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect to historic properties. No response from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The Montana Historical Society concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on December 18, 2019.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; DAHP; and the appropriate local, state, and Federal agencies. 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.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Localized soil disturbance during wood pole replacements, landing improvements, and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be stabilized.</p>		

3. **Plants** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation: No known Federal/state special-status plants are present in the project area. Vegetation would be crushed and left in place, rather than bladed, where possible. Any disturbed areas outside the road prism would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.

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

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter the footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected.

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

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. The nearest occurrence of listed fish is Jocko River, approximately ½ mile east of the project area along the Hot Springs-Rattlesnake No. 1 transmission line. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No work would occur in wetlands and BMPs would be implemented to prevent sediment from entering any adjacent wetlands.

Note: By implementing the following mitigation measures while working near or in wetlands there would be no effect on wetlands.

- At locations adjacent to wetlands, erosion control devices will be utilized to prevent sedimentation of nearby wetlands.
- Any excess soil generated from pole replacements will be disposed of in an upland area away from the wetland.
- Weed free seed and straw will be used to mitigate any soil disturbed areas.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No groundwater use is proposed. All excavation would not be of sufficient depth to intersect groundwater.

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

Explanation: No specially-designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line rights-of-way and on existing access roads. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in kind and replaced in the same location and would not change the visual quality of the area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project would have a small, temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change. The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

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 Realty personnel would perform landowner notifications 30-days prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities would be addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann Date: January 23, 2020

Emma Reinemann – EPR-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)