

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Grizzly – Summer Lake No. 1 Marker Ball Replacement Project

PP&A No.: 4425

Project Manager: Mark Korsness

Location: Lake County, OR

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance and B3.2 Aviation Activities

Description of the Proposed Action:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to remove and replace marker balls on the Grizzly – Summer Lake No. 1 transmission line at the 86/5 transmission tower. As part of BPA's wildfire mitigation effort, BPA noted that plastic and fiberglass marker balls can fail at their attachment point on conductor or ground wire, potentially igniting and falling to the ground to start wildfires. BPA crews have identified those marker balls most at risk for failure where replacements are needed. BPA would like to mitigate wildfire risk by completing replacements of marker balls with the greatest potential for failure before the 2020 wildfire season. Replacement work is currently scheduled for July 2020, and lasting between 2-5 days.

Helicopter landing zones would be necessary for helicopters to land and take off, as well as for staging crew and equipment. No improvements to, grading of, or other ground disturbing work for helicopter landing zones or access roads is anticipated. Large flatbed trucks or similar vehicles would be used to haul materials and equipment but use of loaders, excavators, or other heavy equipment is not anticipated.

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/ Treicia Albert
Treicia Albert
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 3, 2020

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 is located in Southern Oregon on agricultural land. See Table below, for Township, Range, Section Number, County, and State information.

Township	Range	Section	County, State
26S	15E	35	Lake, OR

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Following a review of the potential project impacts to cultural resources, BPA has determined that this undertaking would result in No Historic Properties Affected.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal to no ground disturbance is anticipated. <u>Note:</u> The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to geology and soils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive on existing access roads. • Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work. • Crush vegetation in place of removal. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. Vegetation may be crushed in those locations where equipment would be accessing marker balls. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state sensitive or Forest Service sensitive species are anticipated. <u>Note:</u> The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize vegetation impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive on existing access roads. • Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work. • Crush vegetation in place of removal. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> In general, the project would have minimal impacts to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state sensitive or Forest Service sensitive species.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gray wolf habitat begins about 4 miles to the southwest of the project site; however, the last siting was in 2017. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed species.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitat.

- Drive on existing access roads.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Crush vegetation in place of removal.

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



Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities in any river, stream, or other waterbody along the project and no riparian vegetation would be impacted. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed fish species.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to prevent sediment or contaminants from reaching any waterbodies.

- Erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sedimentation or dust.
- Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located on vehicles and landing zones used on this project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities in any river, stream, or other waterbody along the project and no riparian vegetation would be impacted.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to prevent sediment or contaminants from reaching any wetlands.

- Erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sedimentation or dust.
- Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located on vehicles and landing zones used on this project.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated due to the lack of ground disturbance.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize groundwater contamination potential.

- Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located on vehicles, other equipment, and fly yards used on this project.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact existing land uses.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to land use and specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project would have a minimal impact to visual quality. Replacement marker balls would be similar to the existing marker balls, and consistent with other marker balls along the transmission line.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur temporarily during construction.

11. **Noise**



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

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

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: All activities would be coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work.

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

Signed: /s/ Treicia Albert
Treicia Albert, EPR-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: June 3, 2020