

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Hills Creek – Lookout Point 13/1 Emergency Pole Replacement

PP&A No.: 4,464

Project Manager: Nick Wenzl, TFEF-Alvey

Location: Lane County, OR

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform an emergency in-kind wood pole replacement and replace failing cross-arms on Hills Creek – Lookout Point No.1 structure 13/1. The replacement of the cross-arm is necessary to prevent the wood pole structure from failing and causing a fire danger.

A rocked landing of approximately 50ft x 50ft would be constructed to safely perform work at the structure site. The project would require line trucks, dump trucks, and an excavator. The project site would be accessed using existing roads and no access road improvements would be needed.

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/ Michelle Colletti

Michelle Colletti
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange
Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

June 19, 2020
Date

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: Hills Creek – Lookout Point 13/1 Emergency Pole Replacement

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in the Willamette National Forest. The surrounding land use of the project is forested. There are not wetlands or waterbodies within close proximity to the work areas.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA determined that the implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected (OR 2013 020/SHPO Case No. 15-1812). The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with BPA's findings on August 23, 2016. No other responses were received from consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements and landing improvements. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species impacted. No impacts to state or US Forest Service sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state or US Forest Service sensitive species.

The project would have a no effect to ESA-listed species with the exception of Northern spotted owl. One area of the project located on the Willamette National Forest occurs within Northern spotted owl Designated Critical Habitat and has the potential for nesting owls. Because the project would be occurring during the spotted owl critical breeding period of March 1st through July 15th, it has the potential to impact the species. BPA worked with the US Forest Service to determine that BPA's Hills Creek – Lookout Point 13/1 Emergency Pole Replacement activities

fall within the determination of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” for Power line maintenance activities as described in the *2017 Biological Opinion for Routine Land Management Activities within the Willamette Planning Province of Oregon with the Potential to Disturb the Northern Spotted Owl*.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is not located within a floodplain and there are no nearby water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish. Erosion control best management practices would be used to ensure sedimentation into any water body does not occur.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use. No specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right of ways. Replacement of the wood pole and associated components would be in kind and replaced in the same location

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be a small amount of dust and vehicle emissions from construction activity.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line 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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty personnel coordinated with the Willamette National Forest on June 18, 2020.

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

Signed: /s/ Michelle Colletti
Michelle Colletti, EPR-4
Physical Scientist

June 19, 2020
Date