

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Bell-Boundary No. 3 FY17 to FY19 Identified Wood Pole Replacements

**Project No.:** 4788

**Project Manager:** Tina Edwards – TELP-TPP-1

**Location:** Stevens Country, Washington

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** To maintain reliable power in the region, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform in-kind replacement of five wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along the Bell-Boundary No. 3 transmission line. Replacement poles would be placed in or adjacent to existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augured to assure proper depth placement.

Approximately 0.5 miles of access road improvement, reconstruction, and landing work would be needed to access structure 70/2. Access road work should include blading, shaping, grading, and adding rock. A wetland is present in the project area. Road work would be contained to less than 1/10 acre of disturbance within the wetland.

Wood pole replacement locations are listed below.

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County, State
Bell-Boundary No. 3	60/3	T34N R39E SEC9	Stevens, WA
	60/7	T34N R39E SEC4	Stevens, WA
	70/2	T36N R40E SEC30	Stevens, WA
	71/4, 71/6	T36N R40E SEC20	Stevens, WA

Work would be conducted by crews of four to eight workers, and include electrical linemen and road construction crews. Equipment would include bladers, rollers, dump trucks, and electrical line trucks. 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, 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/ Adrienne Wojtasz*  
Adrienne Wojtasz  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel                      Date: February 16, 2022  
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:** Bell-Boundary No. 3 FY17 to FY19 Identified Wood Pole Replacements

## **Project Site Description**

Proposed routine maintenance activities would be conducted along the Bell-Boundary No. 3 transmission line. Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-ways and access road easements which are located in privately-owned rural, agricultural, and residential areas. A wetland is located adjacent to structure 70/2. Mitigation measures would be implemented to limit any impacts to sensitive resources.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe (CDA), the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT), the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STI), the East Valley School District, and the Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) on August 5, 2019. DAHP provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via a letter dated August 5, 2019, the STI concurred on August 13, 2019, and the CCT concurred on August 21, 2019. BPA reinitiated consultation on November 18, 2019. DAHP provided concurrence with the APE via a letter dated November 18, 2019. BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on April 17, 2020, with addendum determinations on May 19, 2021, and December 3, 2021. DAHP concurred with our initial determination on April 20, 2020, the CCT concurred on April 17, 2020, and the STI concurred on April 20, 2020. The DAHP concurred on May 20, 2021, with the first addendum determination, the STI concurred on May 19, 2021, and the CCT concurred on September 8, 2021. DAHP concurred with the second addendum determination on December 3, 2021. No additional response was received.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements, landing improvements, and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control methods would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known Federal or 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 of the road prism would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any Federal or state special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to already impacted rights-of-way and would not substantially alter the footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would be temporarily disturbed by noise during construction, but there would be no long-term effect.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. There are no fish in the vicinity of the project area. 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**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: A riverine wetland is present in the project area near structure 70/2. BPA conducted a wetland delineation to determine the wetland boundaries. The access road project and landing were designed to limit the impacts to the wetland as much as possible and to less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an acre.

Notes:

- Work would be conducted under Section 404 for Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit 57; Utility Line Activities.
- Wetland boundaries would be identified prior to ground disturbance to minimize unintended impacts.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no use of groundwater proposed and excavation would not extend to a depth that would intersect groundwater.

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

Potential for Significance: No

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

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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

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 have informed landowners of proposed project activities.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz  
Adrienne Wojtasz – EPR-Bell-1  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: February 16, 2022