

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Eugene-Alvey No. 2 Impairment Correction

Project Manager: Rusty Ludt – TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Lane County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to correct an impairment between structure 11/2 and 11/3 of the Eugene-Alvey No. 2 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line in Lane County, Oregon. A wire to wire impairment has been identified between the Hideaway Tap to Hawkings-Alvey No. 1 115kV line and the Eugene-Alvey No. 2 115kV line west of Alvey substation in Lane County, Oregon. The proposed solution to the impairment is to raise the span clearance of BPA's Eugene-Alvey No. 2 line by adding a two-pole wood structure between the existing structures 11/2 and 11/3. Access to the tower installation location would be via existing roads (Dillard Road and Mt. Baldy Lane) and a mountain bike path. A short distance of the mountain bike path (approximately 150 feet) would be temporarily widened from the current 6-foot width to 10 feet wide using small tracked equipment to blade vegetation off the ground surface and perform minor leveling. A small area approximately 20x20 feet would also be cleared and bladed under the new tower location for a landing. All work would take place within the BPA transmission line easement on land owned by the City of Eugene.

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/ Douglas Corkran

Douglas Corkran

Environmental Protection Specialist, ECT-4

Concur:

<u>/s/ Katey C. Grange</u>	<u>July 21, 2022</u>
Katey C. Grange	Date
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: Eugene-Alvey No. 2 Impairment Correction

Project Site Description

The project area is located on the south side of a small mountain (Mount Baldy) overlooking the Willamette Valley south of Eugene, Oregon. The project site is located on a steep south facing slope. The Eugene-Alvey No. 2 line is in shared right-of-way (ROW) with other transmission lines on either side of it. Vegetation in the project area consists of grasses and shrubs, with large blackberry thickets scattered throughout. The new tower would sit between an existing paved road to the east and a gravel hiking and biking trail to the west.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA archeologists performed cultural resource surveys and analyzed the potential for the project to effect historic properties. Based on their findings BPA determined that the project would result in no adverse effect to historic properties. The Oregon SHPO did not comment during the 30 day comment period that ended on July 9, 2022. No comments were received from the other consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would involve minor ground disturbance when widening the path and drilling new holes for the new wood poles, but would only create very small and localized areas of bare soil. The surrounding areas are heavily vegetated and it is unlikely any soil or sediment would migrate off site. Impacts to geology and soils are expected to be low.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor removal of grasses, shrubs and weeds would occur along the edge of the path for access to the site. No rare or sensitive plant species have been documented in or near the project area. Vegetation would grow back rapidly in the fall following construction of the project. Impacts to plants are expected to be low.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status wildlife species are documented in the project area. Some common wildlife species could be scared away from the project area during construction. The minor amounts of vegetation removal is not expected to remove wildlife habitat. Impacts to wildlife are expected to be low.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is in an upland area and no water bodies are nearby. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains or fish are expected.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is in an upland area with no wetlands present nearby. No impacts to wetlands are expected.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is on the side of a small mountain with no groundwater or aquifers nearby. No impacts to groundwater or aquifers is expected.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is just within the southern edge of the City of Eugene's Mount Baldy Park and lies just east of the Dillard East Trailhead. The BPA design team worked with City of Eugene officials to develop an access plan to the new tower that includes widening a small portion (approximately 150 feet) of the hiking and mountain biking trail that leads up the ridge from the Dillard East Trailhead. During construction this section of the trail would be closed to use. Users would be able to bypass the active construction area on a separate trail or on Mount Baldy Lane just to the east of the project area. Signs describing the closures and the project would be placed at the Dillard East Trailhead area and other locations where users might enter the project area. Construction is expected to last several days. The existing widened path would continue to be used for mountain biking and hiking as well as periodic access to the new structure following construction. Overall, the project would have low impacts to land use and specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would add a two-pole wood tower to the existing cleared ROW area. Currently there are eight existing two-and three-pole wood towers and one lattice steel tower within 300 feet of the proposed new wood pole tower. The addition of another tower in this area would be visible to users of the area but would not substantially change the overall visual characteristics of it due to the high concentration of existing similar structures. Impacts to visual quality are expected to be low.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor fugitive dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction of the project. These would be minor and temporary and limited to the time construction is actively occurring. Impacts to air quality are expected to be low.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor temporary equipment and power tool noise would be generated during construction of the project. The noise would be minor and temporary and limited to the time construction is actively occurring. The project would not create any new sources of long term noise. Impact from noise are expected to be low.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The existing biking and hiking trail would be closed to all users during construction to protect them from construction activity. No hazardous materials beyond fuel and oil used in construction equipment would be used during construction. Spill containment kits would be onsite to manage any spills from equipment use or refueling. No impacts to human health and safety are expected.

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 has been working closely with the City of Eugene to obtain access to the site and manage construction.

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

Signed: /s/ Douglas Corkran

Douglas Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist ECT-4

July 21, 2022

Date