

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Pearl-Keeler No. 1 Line Impairment Improvements

PP&A No.: 4817

Project Manager: Amanda Williams, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Washington 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 remove a critical transmission line impairment (P02646) along its Pearl-Keeler No. 1 transmission line between structures 10/3 and 11/1 in Washington County, Oregon. BPA is required to remove line impairments where the distance from the overhead transmission line conductor to the ground surface does not have adequate clearance for safe and reliable operation. For this project BPA proposes to achieve clearance by raising steel structures 10/3 and 11/1 to avoid disturbance to an active apple orchard below the span.

Raising of the two structures would create the need to relocate them to within 100 feet of their current locations. The raised structures would remain within the BPA right-of-way. In order to raise the structures, new footings and leg extensions would be installed. Crews would put the existing conductor in travelers, and a crane would move the existing tower bodies onto the new leg extensions. Temporary landing mats (30 feet by 30 feet) may be used around structure 11/1 to allow for the crane work.

Structure 10/3 is within the apple orchard, and several orchard trees would need to be removed due to the proposed shift in structure location. As part of BPA's existing land rights with Oregon Heritage Farms, BPA would replace the removed trees with new trees in a location determined as appropriate by the landowner.

BPA may also need to conduct roadwork along its existing dirt access road leading to the structures. Road improvements could include the following activities: blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and placing surface rock on to the existing road prisms. General equipment used for these activities include, bucket trucks with crane, graders, rollers, bulldozers, excavators, and dump trucks. Four-inch aggregate road gravel would be used for this project. Geotextile fabric may be added as needed within the road prism for stabilization of road materials.

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/ Aaron Shurtliff
Aaron Shurtliff
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey C. Grange Date: August 2, 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: Pearl-Keeler No. 1 Line Impairment Improvement

Project Site Description

The impairment is located in a flat, rural residential area within an existing apple orchard on private property. There are no waterbodies within 1,000 feet.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On March 3, 2022 BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the Pearl-Keeler No. 1 Line Impairment Project (BPA CR Project No.: OR 2019 129). BPA did not receive any responses from consulting parties. On March 22, 2022 BPA contract archaeologist conducted a cultural resource survey of the 4.5 acre area of potential effect (APE) and no cultural resources were identified. On June 21, 2022 BPA determined the proposed project would have no adverse effect to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include excavation to install new tower footings and remove the existing footings. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored onsite, backfilled, and then graded to original contours.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. A few orchard trees would be removed for installation of the new tower structure. New trees would be planted on-site through coordination with the landowner.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, wildlife species that could be present would likely be habituated to this level of human activity due to the proximity to a public road, and being in an active orchard. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish are present within or near the project site.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation will occur below groundwater level.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would minimally impact land use around the new tower location with the removal of a few orchard trees. Replacement trees would be planted elsewhere on the property as part of this project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The two new structures would be slightly higher in elevation to allow for adequate clearance from the orchard below, however would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area along the ROW.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. Noise would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during daylight hours. There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project site, and there would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work crews would follow appropriate safety precautions. Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

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: The proposed work would occur within BPA's existing easements on private property. Project activities will be coordinated with the landowner.

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Shurtliff
Aaron Shurtliff, EP-AMPN-2
Environmental Engineer

Date: August 2, 2022