

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: North Bonneville-Troutdale No. 1 and No. 2 Emergency Groundwire Replacement

Project No.: P05785

Project Manager: Andrew Young – TEPL-CSB-2

Location: Clark County, WA and Multnomah County, OR

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: BPA proposes to replace the groundwire (wires at the top of transmission structures which protects the structures from lightning strikes) that was damaged in January 2023 where it crosses the Columbia River between Camas, Washington and Troutdale, Oregon. There are two groundwires on each line. The proposed project would re-string new groundwire at eight structures along two parallel transmission lines (North Bonneville – Troutdale No. 1 and No. 2, Towers 27/3, 27/4, 28/1, and 28/2 on each line) that span the Columbia River. Two of the structures are on Lady Island in Clark County, Washington on private property; two structures are on a basalt outcrop called Lone Reef in the middle of the Columbia on Washington DNR property; and four structures are on the Oregon side of the river on private property.

BPA proposes to use helicopters to facilitate installation of new groundwire. The helicopters would transport the groundwire and other materials from the landing zone/material staging area, which sits approximately 0.25 miles to the northwest of the project area on a [flat graveled area next to the City of Camas wastewater treatment plants](#), to the tops of the structures where maintenance crews would attach them. Maintenance crews would either be suspended from the helicopter as human external cargo (HEC) while they complete the re-stringing work, or they would physically climb to the top of the structure from the ground. BPA maintenance crews would access land-based structures with standard BPA maintenance vehicles using existing roads and would access the in-water structures in the Columbia River by boat. Road improvements are not required for this work. No ground-disturbing activities are expected with this project.

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

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

June 20, 2023

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.

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Project Site Description

The project area is located on the banks of the Columbia River and on a rocky island in the middle of the river. The northern towers are on Lady Island, a low flat sandy island with mature cottonwoods adjacent to the towers. The middle towers are located on a small rocky island called Lone Reef, which is inundated during high water. The southern towers cross a relatively flat floodplain area containing a gravel mining operation, with some scattered trees near the river.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), on May 8, 2023. BPA submitted a letter report summarizing the results of BPA's site visit and previous archaeological investigations, and determination that there would be no potential for the project to cause effects to the historic transmission lines or other potential historic properties. DAHP concurred with BPA's Area of Potential Effect (APE) and determination of no historic properties affected in a letter dated May 9, 2023. No additional responses were received within 30 days. No historic or cultural resources would be impacted.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore, there would be no impacts to geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore, there would be no impacts to plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Helicopter use and general construction activity may disrupt some common wildlife species using the area, although the duration of the disruption would be relatively short. No federally-listed or state-listed wildlife species are documented in the project area. No significant impacts to wildlife are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work would take place and no ground-disturbing work would take place. A boat would be used to transport construction crews to the towers on Lone Reef, but no impacts to the Columbia River are expected. No significant impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish are expected.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would take place and all work would take place in upland areas with the exception of Lone Reef which would be accessed by boat. No impacts to wetlands are expected.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground-disturbing work would take place. No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are expected.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes in land use would occur. No specially-designated areas would be affected. No impact to land use or specially-designated areas are expected.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The damaged groundwire would be replaced with new groundwire, which would be similar in appearance to the existing wire. No impacts to visual quality are expected.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some fugitive dust and vehicle emissions from construction equipment would occur during construction, but this would be temporary and minor. No significant impacts to air quality are expected.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some noise would be generated by helicopter use and construction equipment but this would be temporary during construction and there are no residential properties nearby. No significant impacts from noise are expected.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No hazardous materials other than common construction equipment related fluids would be used during construction or use of the project. 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: Underlying landowners would be notified before construction begins.

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 June 20, 2023
Douglas Corkran Date
Environmental Protection Specialist