

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Laclede Substation Transformer Replacement and Metering Upgrade

Project No.: N1015

Project Manager: Jared Lacambra, TPCF-MEAD-GOB

Location: Bonner County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance; B1.4 Air conditioning systems for existing equipment; B1.15 Support buildings; B1.7 Electronic equipment; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to retire an existing transformer and to fund Northern Lights, Inc. (NLI) to install new substation equipment and to construct a new control house with new metering and communication equipment at NLI's 115-kilovolt (kV) Laclede Substation near Laclede, Bonner County, Idaho.

With BPA funding, NLI would install, own, operate, and maintain the following substation equipment within the Laclede Substation yard:

- Three current transformers – one per phase, on the 13.2-kV feeder lines
- Three bus potential transformers – one per phase, on the 13.2-kV feeder lines
- One 115-kV / 13.2-kV transformer
- One 115-kV circuit switcher and associated bus work modifications

NLI would also be funded to construct a new control house with rack space for a new, BPA-owned revenue meter panel segment and associated communication equipment (e.g., modem, antenna, and cables). A new antenna could be installed on the control house roof, if determined it is necessary during final design. BPA would retire its existing transformer in place and would complete software modifications as well as calibration and programming of the new metering and communication equipment. The proposed action would occur entirely within the existing Laclede Substation yard.

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.

Walker Stinnette
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is the existing NLI-owned Laclede Substation in Laclede, Bonner County, Idaho (Township 56 North, Range 3 West, Section 30). All work would occur within the existing substation yard, which was previously disturbed and covered with gravel during the original construction of the substation. No vegetation, wildlife habitat, wetlands, or surface waters are present. Outside of the substation, surrounding land uses include private residences and some small-scale agriculture.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Laclede Substation is not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed action would occur entirely within the existing substation yard, which was substantially disturbed to a depth upwards of 5 feet during the original construction of the substation, and it is highly unlikely that archaeological resources would be identified during construction. Therefore, BPA determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this project is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed ground disturbance would occur within the existing Laclede Substation yard, which was previously disturbed and covered with gravel during the original construction of the substation. NLI would be responsible for implementing standard construction best management practices (BMPs) to prevent erosion and sedimentation and for disposing of any excess excavated material in accordance with all local, state, and federal regulations. The proposed action would not impact geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No vegetation is present. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on plant species or habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No suitable wildlife habitat is present. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on wildlife species or habitat.

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. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies or floodplains and would have no effect on fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation is unlikely to reach depths to ground water. NLI would be responsible for implementing standard construction BMPs to reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not require a change in land use, and the project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in a change in the appearance of the substation yard by adding a new control house and substation equipment. However, these changes would not be overtly noticeable from the outside of the substation yard and would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in emissions in the local area from vehicle and equipment use. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise during construction, which could intermittently exceed current ambient conditions. The noise could be audible from nearby residential properties. Noise impacts would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during typical working hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout implementation of the proposed action to minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human health and safety.

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 action would occur on land owned by NLI. BPA has been in coordination with NLI. No additional landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed:

Walker Stinnette
Environmental Protection Specialist