

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Keller Tap 9/2 and 9/3 Pole Replacement

PP&A No.: 6786

Project Manager: Ryan Piche, TFWK-Grand Coulee

Location: Okanogan, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace two deteriorating wood pole structures on the Keller Tap to Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2 transmission line. The work would include removing the existing wood pole structures 9/2 and 9/3 and replacing them in or adjacent to the existing location. Trucks and equipment would be staged in work areas approximately 50 feet by 50 feet at each of the structure replacement locations. Existing access roads would be used to access the work areas, but landing improvements, such as minor leveling or grading, may occur. The landing at structure 9/2 would need light blading. Fire wraps would be added for both structures.

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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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.¹

/s/ Justin Carr

Justin Carr

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 10, 2025

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

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: Keller Tap 9/2 and 9/3 Pole Replacement

Project Site Description

The proposed action is located in Okanogan county, Washington. The proposed action would occur within and adjacent to BPA's right-of-way (ROW) on two structures located on the Keller Tap to Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2 transmission line.

The ROW in the project area measures approximately 100 feet wide. The two structures proposed for replacement are on ROW surrounded by forested land at approximately 2300 feet elevation within the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

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 the Colville Reservation Tribal Historic Preservation Office (CTCR THPO) on March 25, 2025. The CTCR THPO responded on March 25, 2025, that the project as described would have no adverse effect to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soil disturbance would occur entirely within the BPA right-of-way and be minimal at previously-disturbed landings and pole locations. Poles would be replaced within or immediately adjacent to existing holes.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federally listed or state species of concern occur within the proposed project area. Minor disturbance of non-listed plant species may occur in the immediate vicinity of the structure landing. Restoration would occur as needed.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed action may temporarily disturb wildlife from the effects of vehicle noise and worker presence, however this would be limited to daylight hours and the duration of the work would occur over approximately four days. Yellow-billed cuckoo, monarch butterfly, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee are potentially present in the proposed project area. There is no suitable or critical habitat in the proposed action area for yellow-billed cuckoo. The proposed project activities may temporarily disturb the proposed endangered Suckley's cuckoo bumblebee and proposed threatened monarch butterfly, however that disturbance would be minimal and temporary. Therefore, BPA has determined that the proposed project would have "No Effect" on yellow-billed cuckoo and "not likely to result in jeopardy of proposed species" for Monarch butterfly and Suckley's cuckoo bumblebee.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no streams or other water bodies within the proposed action area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the proposed action area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No proposed activities would affect groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and no proposed project activities would impact existing land uses.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project actions would maintain similar visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would use conventional petroleum powered equipment. Exhaust may temporarily impact air quality in the immediate vicinity of vehicles and equipment.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have temporary noise of conventional vehicles. Work would occur during daylight hours for no longer than eight hours per day. The project would be short in duration – no more than four days in total.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would occur in forested lands on BPA right-of-way not normally utilized by the public.

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 coordinated with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and received the appropriate authorization on March 31, 2025.

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

Signed: /s/ Justin Carr

Justin Carr

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 10, 2025