

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 Structures 19/4 and 30/6 Impairment Remediation Project

PP&A No.: 6614

Project Manager: Debbie Miller – TELC-TPP-3

Location: Flathead and Lake County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities

Description of the Proposed Action:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to relocate guy wires on two wood pole structures located on the Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 high voltage transmission line in Flathead and Lake County, Montana. BPA owns and operates the Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 transmission line which runs south from Kalispell Substation in Flathead County, MT on the west side of Flathead Lake to Kerr substation in Lake County, MT.

Wood pole structure 19/4 in Flathead County, MT has a line clearance impairment between the energized power lines and guy wires. BPA proposes re-locating the guy wires to new anchor locations. This would involve ground disturbance; digging up and removing existing guy wire anchors and relocating to reposition guy wires away from overhead high voltage lines. There is existing right-of-way access to structure 19/4 and adequate landing space. Wood pole structure 30/6 located in Lake County, MT, requires similar work; guy wire relocation due to clearance impairment with the energized power lines. There is existing right-of-way access to this structure and adequate landing space to conduct the work. Ground disturbance associated with removal of the old anchors and installation of new anchors would occur in the existing landings and would be about 40 feet by 80 feet in size.

The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.102 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; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and the current *DOE*

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures, BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Justin Carr

Justin Carr

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange Date: May 14, 2026

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation

This evaluation 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: Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 Structures 19/4 and 30/6 Impairment Remediation

Project Site Description

The project site location for wood pole structure 19/4 is within the Salish Mountains of western Montana near Flathead Lake in the 15l level IV ecoregion. The Salish Mountain ecoregion is forested with average precipitation between 20 and 50 inches per year. The area supports a diverse conifer forest regime with common tree species including Douglas-fir, western larch, ponderosa pine, Engelmann spruce, western red cedar, and lodgepole pine. Topography can vary greatly, ranging from 3000 to 7000 feet. Wood pole structure 30/6 is within the 15b Camas Valley level IV ecoregion. The Camas Valley ecoregion is comprised of mostly level, treeless valley in the rain shadow of the Salish Mountains. Springs, hot springs and wetlands occur locally.

The Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 high voltage transmission corridor is the location of both wood pole structures proposed for remediation. The cleared corridor is approximately 200 feet wide with existing access roads. Regular vegetation management within the corridor is accomplished to promote low-growing vegetation and reduce tall trees that have the potential for energized conductor impairment. The Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 transmission line shares the corridor with Flathead-Hot Springs No. 1 transmission line across approximately one-half of its length including both the 19/4 and 30/6 pole locations.

At the 19/4 structure location, the wood pole structure is on a peak in a portion of the corridor with multiple peaks and valleys. There is existing gravel access road and landing area. The 19/4 structure is located on USDA Forest Service lands. The 30/6 wood pole structure is located in a flat, level, mostly treeless plain adjacent to Flathead Lake. There is gravel access road to the structure and landing area. The 30/6 structure is located on Flathead Tribal Reservation land. Vegetation within the corridor is routinely managed to promote low-growing species and cut any tall growing trees that could interfere with energized lines.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: An Area of Potential Effects (APE) was developed for the project. The project APE was surveyed in 2006 and in 2015 and the APE on the Flathead Reservation was surveyed in 2006 and 2015 and monitored in 2019 prior to/and for the rebuild of the line in that period. No cultural resources were identified at that time in the APE. On March 13, 2026, BPA initiated consultation and sent a project determination to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes (Flathead Indian Reservation) and the Montana State Historic Preservation (SHPO) and determined the project would result in no adverse effect to historic properties. On April 14, 2026, the Montana SHPO concurred with BPA's determination. No other responses were received.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the

finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing access road and landing areas are adequate for all necessary equipment and vehicles for scope of work. BPA's transmission line maintenance crews would excavate existing guy line anchors, relocate the anchors, and back fill original anchor hole locations with native material. As necessary, erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented. Restoration efforts will be inspected prior to demobilization.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing road and landing areas would allow access to both wood pole structures with very minimal disturbance to vegetation. Impacts to vegetation would be limited to areas immediately adjacent to wood pole structures 19/4 and 30/6 and their guy line anchors that would be excavated and relocated.

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA obtained an official species list on May 7, 2026, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to analyze the proposed project's impacts to plant species protected under the ESA. BPA has determined the proposed actions would have "no effect" on Spalding's catchfly. There are no other state sensitive species in the area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary (a few days) human presence and noise from heavy equipment may disturb local wildlife. However, disturbance would be temporary and limited to daylight hours and to the immediate project area. The surrounding land provides adequate escape for any wildlife disturbed by project activities.

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA obtained an official species list on May 7, 2026, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to analyze the proposed project's impacts to wildlife species protected under the ESA. BPA has determined the proposed actions would have "no effect" for Canada Lynx, Grizzly Bear, and North American Wolverine. There are no other state sensitive species in the area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project location at wood pole structure 19/4 has no waterbodies nearby. The project location at wood pole structure 30/6 is approximately 750 feet from Flathead Lake but is located on a large flat plain with minimal chance at slope induced erosion as well as the project being minimal in scope regarding excavation activities. There is no potential for in-water work.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No presence of wetlands in project area or vicinity.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur at depths intersecting groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: One of the wood pole structures is located on tribal lands within the boundaries of Flathead Reservation; Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribal lands. BPA would coordinate activities as necessary with the Salish and Kootenai tribe. The 19/4 structure is located on USFS Flathead National Forest; a timber area. The proposed activities would have no effect on the current land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The existing visual quality would be retained.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have limited, very minimal impacts to air quality due to vehicle operation/heavy equipment operation and minimal, shallow excavation activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have limited, temporary impacts to noise related to vehicle and heavy equipment operation. However, construction activity would occur during daylight hours, when potential impact to people and wildlife would be minimal.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A safe, reliable high voltage transmission system is a human health and safety issue. The project would reduce potential hazards by moving guy lines on wood pole structures 19/4 and 30/6 to safely address a risk to the Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 transmission line. All BPA and BPA-contractor work supporting the project would proceed following established safety practices and guidelines.

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 transmission line maintenance foreman, access road engineers, environmental representatives, and realty representatives have discussed proposed project activities with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes and the USFS and would continue to coordinate activities with the land managers through construction and into post-construction revegetation monitoring.

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: May 14, 2026