

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Biddle Butte Upgrade

Project No.: W1131

Project Manager: Brian Keith – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Skamania County, Washington.

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance, B1.7 Electronic Equipment, B1.19 Microwave, Meteorological, and Radio Towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow T-Mobile to modify an existing wireless installation on a communications tower at the Biddle Butte Radio Station on BPA fee-owned land in Skamania County, Washington. Proposed project actions on the existing transmission structure would include removing three Remote Radio Units, relocating three Remote Radio Units, and installing three Remote Radio Units.

BPA authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

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.

Jessica A. Heppler
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel
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.

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Project Site Description

All work would occur within BPA radio tower facilities. The site is located in Township 1 North, Range 5 East, Section 9, Skamania County, WA. The proposed project site is in a previously disturbed area, and is located in areas that are graveled, paved, or have compacted soils. There are no water bodies or wetlands within close proximity to the project location. Biddle Butte is surrounded by a mix of undeveloped land, mixed agricultural fields, large residential parcels, and timberland.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: On May 12, 2026 the BPA historian determined that the proposed project actions meet the requirements for the *Program Comment for Communications Projects on Federal Lands and Property* (March 13, 2024). Pursuant to Stipulation VI.B. "Collocation of communications antennae," no further Section 106 review/consultation is required.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The project does not involve ground-disturbing activities; therefore, there would be no impacts to geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The project location does not involve ground-disturbing activities; therefore, there would be no impacts to vegetation, including Federal or state special-status species and/or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no Federal or state special-status species or habitats that would be affected by project activities. The work would occur in previously-disturbed areas and would result in no ground disturbance. No vegetation or other habitat would be removed.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish at the project site.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project site is not within, or near a wetland.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities would occur as part of the project actions.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There would be no effects to land use or specially-designated areas. The site is within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). The project proponent, T-Mobile's representative, would confirm with the Skamania County Planning Department that the radio equipment removal and installation is an allowable use under the County's Zoning General Regulations for the CRGNSA.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project activities would replace, move, and add three radio components. The visual effects from this effort are expected to be minor and would remain consistent with the overall visual quality of the site.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Depending upon vehicles or equipment used, there could be minor, but temporary emissions and dust associated with project actions.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There would be no impact to human health or 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 project site is on BPA fee-owned land and would not require any additional landowner notifications, involvement, or coordination.

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

Signed:

Jessica A. Heppler
Environmental Protection Specialist