

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Redmond District, 2026 Brasada-Harney No. 1 Priority Poles

Transmission project bundle number: P04462

PP&A No.: 6696

Project Manager: Christine Sullivan, TIPL-TPP-1

Location: Harney County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace in-kind wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along the Brasada-Harney No. 1 transmission line in the Redmond TLM District.

Thirty-two wood pole structures along the Brasada-Harney transmission line would be replaced. After current pole structures are removed, replacement poles would be placed within approximately 5 feet ahead or back on line from the existing structure. Where needed, the project also includes improvements to existing access roads and landings associated with the transmission line rights-of-way that currently may inhibit access at the specified locations for routine maintenance. Dependent on the structure location and access road conditions, the project may include surface improvements of existing access roads and landings (blading and rocking) as well as improvements and in-kind replacements of existing drainage features. Two approximately 50-foot by 50-foot landings may be constructed at each structure location. Gravel stockpiles would be located in or next to the right-of-way at approved locations.

Table 1. Structure Replacements on the Brasada-Harney No. 1 Transmission Line

Structure Work	Township	Range	Section	Land Ownership
87/5, 87/6, 87/7, 87/8	OR23S	26E	20	Private Rangeland
88/6	OR23S	26E	21	Private Rangeland
89/3,89/4, 89/5, 89/6, 89/8, 90/1	OR23S	26E	22	Private Rangeland
90/2, 90/3, 90/4	OR23S	26E	23	Private Rangeland
92/8, 92/9, 93/1, 93/4, 93/5, 93/6	OR23S	27E	19	Private Rangeland
94/1,94/2, 94/4, 94/5, 94/6	OR23S	27E	20	Private Rangeland
94/7, 95/1, 95/3, 95/5, 95/6, 95/7	OR23S	27E	21	Private Rangeland
95/8	OR23S	27E	22	Private Rangeland

The proposed project would help to maintain reliable power in the region. 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/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 8/28/2026

Attachment(s): Effect Determination

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: Redmond District, 2026 Brasada-Harney No. 1 Priority Poles Project

Project Site Description

The project is located in Central Oregon within the Northern Basin and Range ecoregion. All structure replacements would be at specific locations for existing transmission line support structures on the Brasada-Harney No. 1 transmission line in Harney County, Oregon, in BPA's Redmond Maintenance District. All work would be done on existing managed rights-of-way and legal access roads. The transmission line corridor is 100 feet in width in the project area. The project area consists of sagebrush steppe and the underlying land use is private rangeland.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: On July 31, 2024, BPA initiated consultation for the project with the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Klamath Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Oregon Department of State Lands, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via a letter dated October 23, 2024. There were no other responses from consulting parties. On March 11, 2026, BPA sent a Determination of Effects memo with a determination of adverse effects to historic properties specifically in the Brasada-Harney-1 transmission line miles 87/5 to 90/4 to the consulting parties. The Oregon SHPO concurred with the determination on April 10, 2026, and assigned the new SHPO Project #26-1168.

On August 27, 2026, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Bonneville Power Administration and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the FY21 Redmond District Priority Pole Replacement Project – Brasada-Harney No. 1 Transmission Line Miles 87/5-90/4 was signed. The MOA agrees to four stipulations for the partial mitigation of adverse effects to 12 archaeological sites located between Line Miles 87/5-90/4. The MOU stipulations direct BPA to fund and carry out a cultural resources survey of the entire Brasada-Harney No. 1 transmission line and direct initiation of the regulatory process to document the area between Chickahominy Reservoir and Silver Creek as an archaeological district for future protection. Additionally, BPA would fund educational resources for specific sites and training for the CTWSRO and BPT consulting parties.

For all project sites, BPA would implement avoidance measures including, avoidance of known resource sites, flagging, monitoring, and covering with geotextile fabric, etc. A cultural resource monitor would be present during all work activities at the listed project sites.

Notes:

In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped, and the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager would be immediately notified. Reasonable measures would be taken to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soils are generally rich in clay, silt, and sand. Outcrops of rock as well as rocky patches are common features of the landscape. All wood pole replacements would be in-kind and be placed near the locations of the existing poles. Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements, landing improvements, and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA obtained official species lists under Section 7 of the ESA from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project areas on August 25, 2026. No ESA-listed plant species, Federal special-status species, or state-listed species are known to be present in the project areas. However, if any Federal- or state-listed plant species are unknowingly in the project area, project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. Vegetation within the right-of-way is periodically managed to remove tall-growing vegetation and promote low-growing species, though much of the project area has low-growing vegetation naturally. Sagebrush, juniper, rabbitbrush, and various bunch grasses species sparsely cover the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA obtained an official species list under Section 7 of the ESA from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project areas on August 25, 2026. No project locations are within or near any designated critical habitats or known occupied sites for listed species.

Work would occur in areas maintained as open transmission line right-of-way corridors with little wildlife habitat. During project activities, work with heavy equipment may cause temporary disturbance to wildlife causing avoidance of the area. The disturbance would be of a short duration and would not affect any species' long-term activities.

Due to the lack suitable habitat and no known presence in the project areas, BPA has determined that the projects would have "no effect" on ESA-listed species or their designated critical habitat. No other special-status wildlife would be impacted by project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work or ground disturbance near waterways or any ESA-listed fish streams would occur. The work location is in arid eastern Oregon. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to stabilize the project sites during and after the maintenance activities. For all project locations, site restoration with native seed and mulch would be completed post construction.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are documented within the project area. Additionally, no documented wetlands are within the influence of the project sites.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance for pole installation would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project locations are confined to the existing transmission line right-of-way corridors and off right-of-way access roads with legal rights. Surrounding land use is private rangeland. The project would not impact public land, including any recreational areas. Roads near the project area could still be utilized by recreationists and there are many alternative recreational areas nearby for the public to utilize during the project work period. The project would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions at existing facilities would not alter or affect visual quality. Structure replacements are in-kind and access road improvement work would occur on existing roads. The project would not result in a noticeable visual change from the existing structures and access roads.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project work would be of a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be located away from any populated areas. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is considered normal construction and maintenance. BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery in the region.

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 Realty would notify and coordinate with the landowners/managers in advance of the construction of the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts

Date: 8/27/2026

Physical Scientist (Environmental)