

memorandum

DATE: May 3, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEPR-Bell-1

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Amanda Williams
Project Manager – TEP-TPP-1

Proposed Action: 2012 Kalispell District Wood Pole Replacement Projects

PP&A Project No.: 2123 (Anaconda-Silver Bow #1), 2125 (Rattlesnake-Garrison #1), 2126 (Columbia Falls-Kalispell #1), 2129 (Columbia Falls-Trego #1)

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

Location: Various transmission lines located in Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Granite, and Flathead counties, Montana, as listed below:

Transmission Line	Structure	Township	Range	Section	County
Anaconda-Silver Bow #1	6/1, 6/2	4N	10W	35	Deer Lodge
	11/8, 12/1	3N	9W	22	Silver Bow
Rattlesnake-Garrison #1	43/7, 44/2	10N	13W	11	Granite
	44/6	10N	13W	14	
Columbia Falls-Kalispell #1	7/4	20N	20W	17	Flathead
Columbia Falls-Trego #1	4/1	30N	20W	18	Flathead
	5/3	30N	21W	13	
	6/3	30N	21W	14	
	8/2, 8/6, 8/7	30N	21W	16	
	41/2	33N	25W	1	

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to replace deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc) along the subject transmission lines. Replacement will be in-kind and will utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger will be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement. Landing construction is not planned or anticipated at these locations.

Access road maintenance will be limited to minor blading, grading, and rocking of access road segments that have become impassable. All road maintenance will take place in the existing road prism.

The proposed action will allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

This proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Philip W. Smith, for:

Michael A. Rosales

Physical Scientist

Concur: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Office

Date: May 3, 2012

Attachment:
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: 2012 Kalispell District Wood Pole Replacement Projects

Work Order #: 297322 (Anaconda-Silver Bow #1), 297327 (Rattlesnake-Garrison #1), 298174 (Columbia Falls-Kalispell#1), 297332 (Columbia Falls-Trego #1)

This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landing construction is not planned or anticipated at any of the locations listed. If landing construction becomes necessary for wood pole removal at sites not previously surveyed, an onsite cultural monitor will be required during construction activities. ▪ Crews and equipment are to use existing access roads to and from each work site. Any access road maintenance performed will be limited to the existing road prism. ▪ In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area will be secured and the SHPO and the environmental project lead must be notified. 		
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bull trout may inhabit streams that are within ½ mile of the various transmission lines. Project activities are not planned near water resources containing listed fish species therefore there will be “No Effect” to listed fish species or critical/essential fish habitat. ▪ Grey wolf and Canada lynx have the potential to be present within ½ mile of the various transmission lines. Project activities are not expected to alter or affect habitat conditions for their respective prey species or affect existing habitat and/or distribution. With respect to potential habitat conditions and possible future occupancy of the project area by this species, the proposed project is not expected to result in conditions that would preclude use by any of these species; therefore, this project will have a “No Effect” on listed animal species or habitat. <p>No other listed species or critical habitat, identified in the county species lists, occur within ½ mile of the subject transmission lines.</p>		
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At locations adjacent to surface water/wetlands, erosion control devices will be utilized to prevent sedimentation of waterways during road improvements or structure replacements. By using erosion control devices, planned work will have a “No Effect” on surface water quality or wetland habitat.		
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Special sources of water

8. Other (describe)

Supporting documentation in the official project file:
Effects Determination for Threatened & Endangered Species

Signed: /s/ Michael Rosales

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