

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** McNary Substation Transformer Addition

**Project Manager:** Amy Gardner, TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Umatilla County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.11 Electrical power substations and interconnection facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to add equipment to the McNary Substation to accommodate load growth in the Boardman and Hermiston areas, prevent transformer overloading due to inadvertent flow, and prevent thermal overloads on the 115-kV (kilovolt) and 230-kV systems. This project would prevent generation restrictions that could have an adverse impact on operations to meet fish passage obligations under the 2008 FCRPS Biological Opinion.

The western half of McNary substation is located on BPA fee-owned land, while the eastern half is located on land permitted from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Proposed activities on Corps-managed land are addressed within existing permit and will not require any permit modifications. Most ground disturbing activities would be completed inside the existing substation fenced yard. Some activities would be completed outside the fenced substation including transmission line work, substation yard expansion (total of 42,300 sf) and access road improvement (500 feet).

Within the substation yard:

- Construct two new 230-kV bays, three new 115-kV bays and one 500-kV bay, each including breakers, disconnect switches, voltage transformers, transmission lines, current limiting reactors, and overhead groundwire; replace existing bus work; and add new bus work
- Install a separate pad-mounted station service transformer
- Install 230/115-kV power transformer
- Install 500/230-kV power transformer
- Replace and relocate structure 1/1 on the McNary-Jones Canyon 230-kV transmission line with a three-pole tower to straighten out the alignment of the line as it exits the substation
- Install new communication and control equipment in the relay and control houses

Outside the existing substation fence:

- Relocate approximately 3,000 linear feet of BPA and customer fiber lines within existing conduit

- Expand the substation yard in the southwest corner by 22,000 square feet to add equipment for the new 115-kV bays, which involves installing ground mat, adding rock, and reconstructing the security fence
- Expand the substation yard in the southeastern corner by 20,300 square feet to accommodate equipment for the new 500-kV bay
- Install a new 230-kV line from Bay 5 in the 230-kV yard to the 115-kV yard using existing transmission structures running along the north side of the substation. Two new engineered steel monopoles would be installed to bring the line into the 230-kV yard. The monopoles would be 60-80 feet tall with footings at least 10 feet deep, depending on geotechnical analysis of the soils surrounding the footings
- Widen and resurface 500 feet of existing gravel access road on the western side of the substation and install an asphalt apron at the intersection with the paved substation access road

**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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), 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.

/s/ Carolyn Sharp

Carolyn Sharp  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Act 1 Group

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: /s/ October 24, 2014

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

## 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:** McNary Substation Transformer Addition

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### Project Site Description

McNary Substation is an existing 32 acre substation located 0.25 miles to the south of the Columbia River, just east of Hwy 395, between Third Street and a railroad. The vegetation in the area is shrub-steppe/grassland and sagebrush, though the area immediately surrounding the substation has been previously disturbed by substation construction and operation. Twelve transmission lines enter/exit the substation on the north and the south. The eastern half of the substation is located on land owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Recreational areas operated by the Corps are located to the east (West Park) and north (McNary Wildlife Nature Area) of the substation.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> SHPO concurrence on Area of Potential Effect (APE) 6/13/2014. BPA no effect determination made 9/12/2014 due to level of previous disturbance and absence of cultural material. Determination letter sent to SHPO and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) on 9/15/2014. CTUIR request for cultural monitor during construction of transmission structures outside substation yard.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Substation yard to be expanded by approximately 1 acre. Excess soils and concrete debris will be tested for contamination and disposed of off-site at authorized locations. Erosion control measures would be used.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No species of concern present. Expansion areas are predominately disturbed fill with low quality vegetation. Disturbed areas will be reseeded with a regionally appropriate mix.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Yellow bill cuckoo could possibly migrate through the area using habitat along the Columbia River for roosting and foraging but the habitat is not dense enough to support nesting. The area has not been proposed as critical habitat. Due to timing of construction and the fact that no riparian vegetation will be removed, there will be no effect. No habitat for listed species would be affected by project activities.</p>		

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



Explanation: The Columbia River is located 0.25 miles north of the substation. Third Avenue and the McNary Wildlife Area lie between the project area and the River. Typical erosion control BMPs would be implemented and no riparian habitat would be affected by project activities. The existing stormwater system is adequate to receive additional stormwater runoff from the expanded substation yard.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: None present

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No wells or use of groundwater proposed. An oil containmentment system will be located around the new transformer to prevent oil from entering the drainage system during a catastrophic event. Spill prevention measures would be present on site during construction.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: Public recreational areas (West Park and McNary Wildlife Area) are located to the east and north of the substation.

- ✓ Maintain access to recreational areas located off of Third Street during construction.
- ✓ Provide informational materials, such as on-site signage, describing the project and why it is needed
- ✓ Use traffic safety signs and flaggers to inform motorists and manage traffic when transporting equipment, materials and construction vehicles to the work site.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Addition of equipment and expansion of substation yard by 1 acre will be visually consistent with existing substation.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction. Dust abatement BMPS would be used to control construction impacts.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions.

### 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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

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#### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Coordination has occurred with the US Army Corps of Engineers; proposed activities are within existing permitted uses; special provisions/mitigations requested will be implemented.

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

Signed: /s/ Carolyn Sharp

Date: October 24, 2014