

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** “A” Analog Equipment Removal

**Project Manager:** Vincent “Charley” Majors

**Location:** Multiple Locations in Oregon and Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to decommission communication components at the substations and radio facilities listed below. Replacement equipment has already been installed and now BPA needs to remove obsolete equipment. The proposed work would improve work areas and structural integrity of structures that support network operations.

Non-ground disturbing work at the following BPA facilities would include, but is not limited to, removing decommissioned antennas, coaxial cable, passive reflectors, and waveguides on radio towers or buildings.

- Augspurger Radio Station in Skamania County, WA
- Ashe Substation in Benton County, WA
- Beverly Radio Station in Grant County, WA
- Biddle Butte Radio Station in Skamania County, WA
- Big Eddy 230-kV Substation in Wasco County,
- Boardman Substation in Morrow County, OR
- Coyote Springs Substation in Morrow County, OR
- Dittmer Control Center in Clark County, WA
- Franklin Substation in Franklin County, WA
- Hanford Substation in Benton County, WA
- Kennewick Radio Station in Benton County, WA
- Midway Substation in Benton County, WA
- John Day Substation in Sherman County, OR
- Roosevelt Radio Station in Klickitat County, WA
- Ross Radio Station in Clark County, WA
- Slatt Substation in Gilliam County, WA
- Vantage Substation in Grant County, WA
- Wasco Radio Station in Sherman County, WA

Ground disturbing work at the following BPA facility would include removing an existing wood pole with an antenna and conduit, and relocating the VHF whip antenna from the removed wood pole to existing adjacent radio tower.

- Hood River Substation in Hood River County, OR

Removed material from all locations would be recycled or disposed of in approved facilities.

**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, Jul. 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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Doug Corkran

Doug Corkran  
Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 22, 2019

Attachments: Environmental Checklist  
USFWS NLAA Concurrence Letter

# 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:** "A" Analog Equipment Removal

---

## Project Site Description

All work would occur within BPA substations and radio tower facilities, except Coyote Springs Substation, which is a Portland General Electric facility. The sites are located in Oregon and Washington, mostly in the Columbia River Gorge area, and the Tri-Cities area of Washington. The only proposed ground disturbance would be at the Hood River Substation. All sites have previous ground disturbance, and are located in areas that are graveled, paved, or have compacted soils.

## 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> BPA's archaeologist and historian reviewed the proposed activities and determined that these types of activities do not have the potential to cause effects to historic or cultural properties.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication sites, except for the Hood River Substation pole removal project, which would adhere to best management practices to prevent soil erosion.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication sites, except for the Hood River Substation pole removal project, which is in a graveled substation yard that is devoid of vegetation. There would be no impacts to special-status or Federal ESA-listed plants.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> At Franklin Substation, there are occurrence records for pygmy owls and a sage grouse lek, approximately 0.5 miles away, but the project noise would be consistent with the ambient noise of the substation and adjacent highway.</p> <p>The Augspurger Radio Site is adjacent to Northern spotted owl designated critical habitat, and known spotted owl occurrences. A biological assessment concluded that this project is not likely to adversely affect (NLAA) the Northern spotted owl, provided that the work occur between July 16 and February 28, to avoid the critical nesting season (March 1-July 15). On March 26, 2019, the US Fish and Wildlife Service provided concurrence with the NLAA determination.</p> <p>There are no special-status wildlife species or habitat present at the remaining sites. The project would have no impacts to special-status species.</p> <p>If any active nests are found on the structures prior to the equipment removal activities, the work would be delayed until the nest is unoccupied.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication sites, except for the Hood River Substation pole removal project, which is not near any water bodies, floodplains, or fish habitat.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands at the existing communication sites.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication sites, except for the Hood River Substation pole removal, which would be to a depth of 4 feet. The hole would be backfilled with gravel. The Hood River Substation is approximately 40 miles east of the nearest EPA Region 10 Source Aquifer System. There would be no effects to groundwater or aquifers.

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

Explanation: There would be no change to land use at any of the locations. The Augspurgen and Biddle Butte radio tower sites are located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). The US Forest Service has been notified of the proposed project, which would result in a minor net improvement in the overall visual quality at these sites. None of the other sites are in specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: At most of the sites, the visual quality would improve because large microwave dishes would be removed from radio towers and substation building facades.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. **Noise**

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

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: The proposed work would improve work areas and structural integrity of structures that support network operations, and would maintain reliable power 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, 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:

---

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

Description: BPA would notify and coordinate with underlying landowners when necessary.

---

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger  
Beth Belanger, ECT-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: April 22, 2019