

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Wine Country-Midway No. 1 Transmission Line Impairment Remedy

**PP&A No.:** 3905

**Project Manager:** Mark Korsness

**Location:** Benton County, Washington

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to remedy four impairments on the Wine Country-Midway transmission line within BPA's Tri-Cities District. An impairment is an area where the distance from the conductor to the ground surface is inadequate, per National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards, resulting in a threat to line reliability and posing a risk to public health and safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure the line meets current NESC and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) standards.

At each of the four locations, BPA proposes to install wood pole H-frame prop structures below the transmission lines in order to raise the conductor further from the ground. Prop structures would be installed near 23/4, 24/3, 24/6, 25/1. The prop structures would be located approximately three to five hundred feet ahead of the existing structures listed above. No road work would be required and only minimal disturbance to set line-tuck outriggers or install the wood poles is anticipated. Work is proposed to occur in fall of 2019 and would utilize the following type of equipment: line truck, auger truck, tractor trailer.

**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/ Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts  
Biological Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange  
Katey Grange  
NEPA Compliance Office

Date: August 14, 2019

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:** Wine Country-Midway No. 1 Transmission Line Impairment Remedy

## Project Site Description

The proposed project area is located in central Washington and consists of shrub steppe and agricultural lands. Most of the project work would occur on DOE-Richland managed Hanford Reach National Monument.

Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Manager	USGS Quad Name
Wine Country-Midway				
23/4	T13N R24E Section 22	Benton, WA	Private/Dept. of Energy, McGee Ranch/Riverlands Unit	Emerson Nipple
24/3	T13N R24E Section 22	Benton, WA	Dept. of Energy, McGee Ranch/Riverlands Unit	Emerson Nipple
24/6	T13N R24E Section 14	Benton, WA	Dept. of Energy, McGee Ranch/Riverlands Unit	Emerson Nipple
25/1	T13N R24E Section 14	Benton, WA	Dept. of Energy, McGee Ranch/Riverlands Unit	Emerson Nipple

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p><b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> In July 2019, BPA project archaeologist received concurrence that the Hanford Tribes have agreed that no additional cultural resource, or botanical survey work would be required for this project, as all four urgent impairment locations are within the areas recently covered by the NHPA Section 106 consultation conducted for BPA's Midway-Moxee-Grandview rebuild projects. Prior to starting work, a transportation plan using the existing infrastructure would be reviewed by BPA cultural staff, to ensure all known archaeological sites would be avoided.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>2. Geology and Soils</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Project impacts would be minimized by driving on existing access roads and reducing construction footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work. During construction, all appropriate Best Management Practices would be utilized. All disturbed areas would be stabilized and seeded.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>3. Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> A state sensitive species, Pipers daisy, does occur in the vicinity of the project. Project impacts would be minimized by driving on existing access roads, reducing construction footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work, and crushing vegetation in place of removal. If any ground disturbance does occur, the area would be stabilized and seeded with a geographic and climate-appropriate seed mix. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species. The project would also minimize impacts to sensitive species and habitats discussed in the Hanford Site Biological Management Plan by measures stated above, as well as, conducting work in fall 2019, outside the fire season.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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



Explanation: There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat would be minimized by driving on existing access roads, reducing construction footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work, and crushing vegetation in place of removal. The project would also minimize impacts to sensitive species and habitats discussed in the Hanford Site Biological Management Plan by measures stated above, as well as, conducting work in fall 2019 outside the fire season and working outside any wildlife timing restrictions to minimize wildlife noise disturbance.

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



Explanation: The proposed project area is not near any fish-bearing waterbodies

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands occur within the proposed project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The addition of four prop structures would slightly alter the visual quality, but overall the proposed changes would be consistent with the existing surroundings of the transmission line corridor.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur temporarily during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact 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, 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: All activities would be coordinated with landowners and DOE-Richland prior to beginning work.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts, EPI-4  
Biological Scientist

Date: August 14, 2019