

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Tucannon River Substation Yard Improvements

PP&A No.: 4140

Project Manager: Heidi Meyer – TELF-TPP-1

Location: Columbia County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 – Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: At Tucannon River Substation, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to excavate soil and rock around the perimeter of the substation and under equipment and replace it with base and substation yard rock. The proposed project would prevent water from pooling and frost heave of soil into the switchyard rock. To facilitate the work, the existing entry road would be improved with additional rock to allow for construction equipment and silt fence would be installed to encapsulate a staging area adjacent to the substation.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Date: January 29, 2019

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

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: Tucannon River Substation Yard Improvements

Project Site Description

The proposed project would take place at Tucannon River Substation in Columbia County, Washington. Project activities would take place inside the substation fenceline, along the existing entrance road, and in the area between the entry road and substation fence. The substation is located in BPA’s Spokane district in Section 8 of Township 10N, Range 41 E. The surrounding area includes farmland to the west and undeveloped state managed lands to the west. The area between the road and substation fenceline consists of flat terrain with some grass.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> All work is located within the disturbed substation area, which was subjected to cultural review prior to the construction of the substation and no historic properties were identified. The proposed work would have no potential to effect historic properties.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project includes excavation within previously disturbed substation yards; therefore, the project would have no impact to geology in soils.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special status species are present in the project area. Since the project will take place in the substation yard, it is expected that the area of impact will already be free of vegetation and plants will not be impacted.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Washington Natural Heritage Program and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service data was used to assess the impact to federal and state special status species. There are no special status-species present in the vicinity of the project area; therefore, there would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> All project activities at Tucannon River Substation will occur approximately 0.8 miles from the nearest water body, which is the Tucannon River, and will have no impact due to distance.		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the project at Tucannon River.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Spill prevention measures will be utilized during construction activities. The projects 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: There would be no change to the visual quality of the areas as a result of the proposed activities.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The project would have no significant impacts on air quality; however a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the substations 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: All project activities will be occurring on BPA-owned property and surrounding landowners would not be affected.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann
Emma Reinemann
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: January 29, 2019