

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: St. Clair-South Tacoma #1 230-kV Impairment Corrections

PP&A No.: 4202

Project Manager: Cynthia Rounds, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Pierce County, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to correct two areas along the St. Clair-South Tacoma transmission line where the ground to conductor distance was determined to be insufficient with current electrical safety standards, referred to as impairments. These corrections would be made by building H-frame prop structures between Structures 16/3 and 16/4 (Impairment #1) and Structures 19/4 and 20/1 (Impairment #2).

The H-frame prop structures would be located approximately 592 feet ahead on line (AOL) from the existing Structure 16/3 and approximately 670 AOL from the existing structure 19/4. The H-frame prop structures would consist of two Class H1 wood poles and a metal cross arm. No guy wires would be required. Once installed, the line crew would move to the structures AOL and back on line (BOL) to remove conductor and retention of the conductor. Each work area would be brushed ahead of time to allow equipment to safely setup. No landings would be created or improved for this project.

Transmission Line	Structure(s)	Township	Range	Section	Land Use
St. Clair-South Tacoma No. 1	16/3	18N	3E	33	BPA Fee-Owned
St. Clair-South Tacoma No. 1	19/4	18N	3E	16	BPA Fee-Owned

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/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon - EPR-4

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 18, 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: St. Clair-South Tacoma #1 230-kV Impairment Corrections

Project Site Description

The Impairment #1 and Impairment #2 work areas are located within relatively level field comprised of mostly grasses and some low-growing shrubs.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A cultural resources survey and Section 106 consultation were completed for the project APE. No resources were identified in the immediate vicinity of the proposed work areas. Washington DAHP agreed with a no effects determination from a survey report; on 9/30/2019, Log No.: 2019-08-05770-BPA. The Squaxin Island Tribe concurred with BPA's findings on 10/9/2019 and the Nisqually Indian Tribe concurred with BPA's findings on 10/10/2019. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological resources (BPA, WA DAHP, Squaxin Island Tribe, and Nisqually Indian Tribe) would be contacted.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. Stormwater BMPs would be used as needed during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitat)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. No special-status species are present. A survey conducted on 09/27/2018 and 09/28/2018 by BPA employees confirmed this.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Both work areas are potential suitable habitat for the Mazama pocket gopher. A survey conducted on 9/28/2018 by BPA and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) did not locate the Roy Prairie subspecies of the Mazama pocket gopher at Impairments #1 or #2. Because the project may affect the Mazama pocket gopher, formal consultation was initiated with USFWS. It was determined that the project is not likely to adversely affect the Roy Prairie subspecies of the Mazama pocket gopher (MPG). USFWS agreed with this determination in a Biological Opinion (01EWF00-2019-F-0155) dated 05/15/2019. Mitigation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbed areas would be seeded with a mix of grasses and/or forbs which complements the species immediately adjacent to the affected area. Where the affected areas contain mostly or exclusively nonnative pasture grasses, they would be seeded with a conventional, nonnative (but non-invasive), herbaceous mix. 		

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



Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains occur at or within the area of influence of the worksites and there would be no in-water work required. Appropriate stormwater BMPs would be used during the project as needed to control runoff or erosion. Work areas would be stabilized upon completion of project activities and reseeded. A no effect determination addressing ESA-listed aquatic species and essential fish habitat was completed for the project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands occur at or within the area of influence of the work sites.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. Any spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

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



Explanation: The project locations are within existing transmission line rights-of-way and would not change existing land uses. Project locations do not include any specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Two new H-frame wood pole prop structures would also be installed in an existing transmission line corridor. The overall visual change would be consistent with the existing transmission line use in the area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project has a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No known hazardous conditions are known. Completion of this project would increase system stability and reliability to the service area as well as correct the current impairments.

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 has coordinated with the current landowner where the two impairments exist. They have been notified and are aware of the proposed project and schedule.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnell Deacon Date: October 18, 2019
Jonnell Deacon – EPR-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)