

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Grand Coulee TLM District Wood Pole Replacements Identified in FY18

PP&A No.: 3930

Project Manager: Meadow Nelson – TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Douglas and Okanogan counties, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform in-kind replacement of nineteen wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along several transmission lines. Replacement poles would be placed in or adjacent to existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augered to assure proper depth placement.

Approximately 10 linear miles of access road improvements are required in order to reach structures 5/2, 7/8, and 8/10 of the Keller Tap transmission line; 32/4 of the Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 transmission line; and 25/7, 25/8, and 26/5 of the Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2 transmission line. Access road work would include blading, grading, shaping, adding rock, installation of drain dips, landing creation, and replacement of cross-drain culverts.

Wood pole replacement locations are listed below:

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County, State
Grand Coulee-Chief Joseph No. 2	11/3	T29N R29E SEC29	Douglas, WA
Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1	17/1	T29N R28E SEC16	Douglas, WA
	32/4	T29N R25E SEC25	Douglas, WA
Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2	12/2, 12/3	T30N R29E SEC33	Douglas, WA
	18/7, 19/1	T30N R28E SEC11	Okanogan, WA
	25/7	T31N R27E SEC11	Okanogan, WA
	33/2	T32N R27E SEC17	Okanogan, WA
	33/6, 33/7	T32N R27E SEC8	Okanogan, WA
	36/3, 37/1	T33N R26E SEC36	Okanogan, WA
	37/2, 37/4	T33N R26E SEC35	Okanogan, WA
Keller Tap to Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2	5/1, 5/2	T29N R31E SEC32	Okanogan, WA
	7/8	T29N R31E SEC27	Okanogan, WA
	8/10	T29N R31E SEC26	Okanogan, WA

The proposed action would maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

/s/ Katey Grange Date: November 13, 2020

Katey C. Grange
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: Grand Coulee TLM District Wood Pole Replacements Identified in FY18

Project Site Description

Proposed routine maintenance activities would be conducted along the Grand Coulee-Chief Joseph No. 2, Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1, Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2, and Keller Tap to Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2 transmission lines. Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-ways and access road easements which are located in privately and tribally managed rural, agricultural, and undeveloped areas. Vegetation There are no water bodies nor wetlands in the vicinity of the project area; however, an ephemeral drainage intersects the access road work required to access structure 27/1 of the Grand Coulee-Okanogan No. 2 transmission line.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated Area of Potential Effect (APE) consultation with the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP), Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation on January 29, 2019. The project area was surveyed by a crew contracted through the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. No cultural resources were identified during the survey and BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect to historic properties. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation concurred with BPA's determination on August 24, 2020 and DAHP concurred on August 25, 2020.

Notes:

- In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; DAHP; and the appropriate local, state and Federal agencies. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements, landing improvements and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known Federal/state special-status plants are present in the project area. Vegetation would be crushed and left in place, rather than bladed, where possible. Any disturbed areas outside the road prism would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any Federal or State special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter the footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. There are no fish in the vicinity of the project area. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present in the vicinity of the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed and excavation would not extend to a depth that would intersect ground water.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially-designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line rights of way. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in-kind and replaced in the same location.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a small, temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and 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: N/A

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

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty personnel would perform landowner notifications 30-days prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities would be addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann – EPR-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: November 13, 2020