

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Radar Hill Substation Interconnection

Project No.: L0421

Project Manager: Tom Pender

Location: Franklin County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electrical power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to conduct switch work on the Scootene Tap to Midway-Benton No. 1 Transmission Line and within the Scootene Substation. The work is needed to accommodate a transmission interconnection request by Big Bend Electric for their new Radar Hill Substation.

The proposed project, along the Scootene Tap to Midway-Benton line, would install two new disconnect switches at existing suspension structures 20/7 and 20/8. The existing wood pole structures would be replaced with new un-guyed light duty steel 3-pole disconnect switch tap structures connecting to adjacent steel lattice switches. A new quick-break line disconnect switch with an associated 3-pole light duty steel structure would be constructed approximately 100 feet Back-On-Line (BOL) of structure 21/9. Existing Structure 21/9 and adjacent switch would also be replaced with a new 3-pole light duty steel structure and new switch, but would utilize the existing switch stand. In addition, a disconnect switch would be replaced at BPA's Scootene Substation. General equipment used for this type of work includes: auger truck, tractor-trailer, and transmission line bucket truck.

A total of approximately 0.5 acre of grading and rocking would be required to create level construction work surfaces at structures 20/7, 20/8, 21/9, and BOL of 21/9 on the Scootene Tap to Midway-Benton line. In addition, at each switch location, geo-textile fabric and rock would be installed under the grounding platform with footing stubs and switch operator grounding platform footings being directly embedded in the ground. No access road improvements would be required and all work would occur within BPA's existing right-of-way and within the existing fenced substation yard on BPA fee-owned land. General equipment used for this type of work includes: transport dump trucks, dozer, grader, and vibratory roller compactor.

The proposed project would also consist of BPA installing a new revenue meter at Big Bend's Radar Hill Substation.

A construction storage area may be required for the proposed work, however, a location has yet to be identified. Any newly identified work areas would be environmentally reviewed prior to its use on the project.

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
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>April 23, 2021</u>
Sarah T. Biegel	Date
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: Radar Hill Substation Interconnection

Project Site Description

The proposed switch project to accommodate Big Ben's Radar Hill Substation interconnection is located along the existing Scootenev Tap to Midway-Benton Transmission line right-of-way on private land in central Washington's Franklin County (T14N, R29E, Sections 26 - 28) and within BPA's Scootenev Substation (T14N, R30E, Section 36). The project area is a mixture of developed agricultural storage lot, agricultural lands, shrub-steppe grass lands, and existing substation yard. Surface waters in the general vicinity of the proposed project area consist of an agricultural canal, an intermittent stream with an adjacent wetland, and a complex of prairie pothole lakes.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: The BPA contract archaeologist completed background research and an intensive field survey of the proposed project area and determined the project actions would result in No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties. No previously recorded archaeological resources were located in the project area. A historic transmission line (Scootenev Tap of the Midway-Benton No. 1 Transmission Line) and a historic substation (Scootenev Substation) were identified. However, the proposed project activities would not diminish any of the standards under which they are considered eligible and would not result in an adverse effect. No additional review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required for this action at this time.

Note: The following measures would be implemented.

- Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the Environmental and Cultural Specialists should be notified immediately.
- Any necessary additional work sites outside of previously-consulted upon areas would obtain Section 106 Concurrence prior to use.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Approximately 0.5 acre of soil disturbance would occur at the switch installation locations from grading, removal of existing pole structures, and installation of pole structures and switches. For the most part, disturbed areas would be rocked. Any other areas of disturbance would be restored by the landowner or restored and seeded with a climate appropriate mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Approximately 0.5 acre of predominantly previously-disturbed area would be graded and rocked. The proposed project would have no effect to Federal/state special-status plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have temporary noise and disturbance impacts to wildlife related to elevated equipment noise and human presence. There would be no effect to Federal/state special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The nearest water body, a non-fish bearing intermittent stream and adjacent wetland, occurs approximately 225 feet from the nearest ground disturbance. The project would have no impact to surface waters and there would be no effect to Federal/state special-status fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The nearest water body, an intermittent stream and adjacent wetland, occurs approximately 225 feet from the nearest ground disturbance. The project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The grading and augering involved would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use or specially-designated areas as a result of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Replacement of existing pole structures and installation of the new pole structure and switch installation would cause visual changes to the project area and immediate surroundings. These changes would be minimal and consistent with the existing transmission line ROW.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected for this area as a result of this project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated to result from this project.

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 is in coordination with the adjacent landowners and easement holders.

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 April 23, 2021
Laura Roberts, ECT-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist