

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Olympia-Grand Coulee No. 1 Phase IV Insulator Replacement

PP&A No.: 4228

Project Manager: Mark Korsness – TEPL-TPP-1

Location: King, Pierce, and Thurston 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) is proposing to replace insulators and install fall protection along the Olympia-Grand Coulee No. 1 287 kV transmission line from miles 24 through 70, along with insulators and fall protection at two dead-end structures at the Olympia Substation. All insulator replacement activities would be accessed via helicopter or by utilizing existing access roads and landings. No road or landing improvements would occur.

BPA proposes to replace insulators, strings of bell shaped ceramic, polymer, or glass discs that connect the conductor to the transmission line structures. Linemen would access transmission structures and change out insulators using a line truck and/or helicopter. In steep, rough terrain, helicopters are often necessary to assist in transporting the old and new insulators to and from linemen positioned at conductor level on the transmission structures. The project would require multiple landing zones identified along the transmission line. Equipment utilized for the insulator replacement work includes; line trucks, pickup trucks, flatbed tractor-trailer, firefighting water truck/trailer, and helicopters.

Additionally, BPA would install fall protection on the vertical climbing path of each transmission tower. The cable safety system would be connected to the tower with a series of brackets approximately every 10 feet and a top and bottom anchor. Once installed, the system would be utilized when climbing the tower by attaching a harness to a specialized pulley which allows the linemen to glide along the safety cable as they climb. Installation would require a line truck and two-to-three linemen in the structure and one-to-two linemen on the ground.

Access for the proposed project would be by existing roads. No ground disturbing activities are anticipated. Any additional work areas not previously identified, would be environmentally reviewed prior to 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/ Katey C. Grange</u>	<u>August 30, 2021</u>
Katey C. Grange	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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in western Washington and consists of a mixture of forest lands managed for timber, agricultural lands, and rural residential. Surface waters in the general vicinity of the proposed project include several rivers, perennial and intermittent streams, and wetlands. Project location and land ownership listed below.

Township	Range	Section	County	Ownership
17N	2E	13,14	Pierce	Private
17N	3E	4,5,7,8,18	Pierce	Private
18N	3E	33-36	Pierce	Private
18N	4E	22-24,27-29,31,32	Pierce	Private
18N	5E	1,2,9-11,16,17,19,20	Pierce	Private
19N	5E	36	Pierce	Private
19N	6E	13,14,20-23,29,31,32	Pierce	Private
19N	7E	3,4,8,9,17,18	King, Pierce	Private
20N	7E	34-36	King	Private
20N	8E	11-15,21,22,28-31	King	Private and WA Dept. of Natural Resources
20N	9E	7-10,16,17	King	Private
18N	2W	32	Thurston	BPA

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation:

BPA conducted consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) for the entire Phase IV of the Olympia-Grand Coulee Insulator Replacement Project that initially included access road improvements (the road improvements are no longer proposed as part of the work addressed in this CX). BPA initiated consultation on September 15, 2020 with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). The consulting parties were informed of the project and provided an opportunity to provide information on the project Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE included locations in King, Pierce, and Thurston counties, Washington.

A cultural resources field survey was conducted within the APE. Four of BPA's transmission lines are located within the project APE: the Olympia-Grand Coulee No.1, Raver-Paul No.1, St. Clair-South Tacoma No.1, and the Chehalis Covington No.1 transmission lines and are considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). BPA determined that the proposed project

activities would not affect these resources. Additionally, five built historic resources were recorded within the APE: a Mobile Home (c. 1972) and Accessory Buildings located at 12501 252nd St East (recommended not eligible), a Quarry Building and Site (recommended not eligible), the Voight Creek Bridge (recommendation updated to eligible), a Drainage Ditch (recommended not eligible), and the Tacoma Rail Mountain Division Railroad (previously determined eligible).

On July 27, 2021, BPA submitted the field survey report to its consulting parties for a 30-day review period and a determination letter stating that the proposed project would have no adverse effect to historic properties. On August 03, 2021, the DAHP requested an updated review of newly recorded resource: Voight Creek Bridge, Property ID 725326 and on August 09, 2021 BPA submitted an updated determination and report to its consulting parties with a determination that the bridge is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and that the previous determination of no adverse effect to historic properties remains appropriate. On August 18, 2021, the DAHP notified BPA that they concur with the finding of no adverse effect. No additional consulting parties responded.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to geology or soils are anticipated from project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no federal/state special-status species or habitat present within the project area. No impacts to plants are anticipated from project as existing access roads and landings would be used.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no federal/state special-status species or habitat present within the project area. In general, the project would have temporary noise and disturbance impacts to local wildlife related to elevated equipment noise and human presence, but any disturbed wildlife would temporarily disperse to adjacent habitat during the temporary disturbance.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area crosses several rivers and perennial and intermittent streams. Federal/state special-status fish species and designated critical habitat do occur within the project area. However, as the project does not expect any ground disturbance, no impacts to federal/state special-status fish species, habitats, or surface waters are anticipated from project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands do occur within the project area. As the project does not expect any ground disturbance and would utilize existing roads during the dry season, there are no impacts to wetlands anticipated.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated from project.

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: There may be a slight change to visual quality resulting from replacement insulators being made of differing materials than those being removed.

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 noise would occur during daylight hours from helicopter use and installation activities. No ongoing noise increase is expected in 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 landowners, including WA Department of Natural Resources.

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 August 30, 2021
Laura Roberts, ECT-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist