

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: North Bonneville Substation Revenue Meter Relocation and Backup Station Service Upgrades

Project No.: P04563

Project Manager: John A. Durstock, TPCV-TPP-4

Location: Skamania County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.7 Electronic equipment; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to relocate a revenue meter and upgrade backup station service equipment at BPA's North Bonneville Substation in Skamania County, Washington (Township 2 North, Range 7 East, Donation Land Claim 39). The Public Utility District No. 1 of Skamania County (Skamania PUD) is expanding their nearby North Bonneville Annex Substation, and BPA's proposed action is in support of the Skamania PUD substation expansion project.

Specifically, BPA would:

- Remove an existing revenue meter from BPA's North Bonneville Substation control house and install that meter in Skamania PUD's newly constructed North Bonneville Annex Substation control house. All work would occur entirely inside the two control houses.
- Remove existing potential transformer (PT) and current transformer (CT) cables between North Bonneville Substation and North Bonneville Annex Substation. The PT and CT cables would be pulled from their existing underground conduit, and the conduit would be retired in place. No ground disturbance would be required.
- Install one new disconnect switch within the existing North Bonneville Substation yard. All ground disturbance associated with the new disconnect switch installation would occur within previously-disturbed compacted gravel fill that constitutes the North Bonneville Substation yard. General equipment used for yard work would include cranes, excavators, bulldozers, dump trucks, and substation maintenance vehicles.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel December 13, 2021

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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property at BPA's North Bonneville Substation in North Bonneville, Skamania County, Washington (Township 2 North, Range 7 East, Donation Land Claim 39). All proposed ground disturbance would occur within the fenced substation yard, which was previously disturbed and covered in gravel, and is currently maintained clear of vegetation. The remaining proposed actions do not require ground disturbance and would occur indoors or immediately outside of the substation fence where the PT/CT cables would be removed. Outside of the substation, the surrounding area is primarily maintained transmission line right-of-way (ROW) consisting of regularly mowed grasses and weeds, with private residences (located approximately 900 feet west), Cascade Cemetery (located approximately 450 feet south), the BNSF railway, Highway 14, and a few isolated stands of conifer trees. Greenleaf Creek is located approximately 750 feet east of the site. The project site is underlain by the Pilchuck soil series, which is not hydric, and there are no wetlands present. All work areas are located within a designated Urban Area of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA).

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: North Bonneville Substation is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, the proposed undertaking would not alter the integrity or eligibility of the substation. Similarly, the proposed undertaking does not have the potential to affect archaeological resources, as all ground-disturbing activities would occur within the previously-disturbed compacted gravel fill that constitutes the substation yard. Therefore, the proposed undertaking would have no potential to cause effects to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All ground disturbance would occur within previously-disturbed compacted gravel fill that constitutes the North Bonneville Substation yard. Standard construction best management practices (BMPs) would prevent erosion and sedimentation. Excavated spoils from the installation of the new disconnect switch would be disposed of according to all local, state, and Federal regulations. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All ground disturbance would occur within the North Bonneville Substation yard, which is maintained clear of vegetation. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, current ambient noise and disturbances are high in the area due to routine maintenance and operations at the substation and activities associated with surrounding land uses. As such, wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely already be habituated to human activity. There are no known occurrences of any special-status wildlife species, and no suitable species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The closest body of water is Greenleaf Creek, which is located approximately 750 feet from the project site. No in-water work is proposed and no project activities would occur within a floodplain. Standard construction BMPs would prevent indirect impacts to off-site water bodies, floodplains, and fish. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within the project site. Standard construction BMPs would prevent indirect impacts to off-site wetlands. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation for the new disconnect switch structure footings could reach depths that would intersect groundwater. Standard construction BMPs would reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is located entirely within a designated Urban Area of the CRGNSA, which means the project would be exempt from compliance with CRGNSA requirements, including those contained in the CRGNSA Management Plan. No consistency review by

the U.S. Forest Service would be required. The proposed action would be consistent with current land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Installing a new disconnect switch would result in a perceptible change in the appearance of the North Bonneville Substation yard. However, this change would be minor relative to the scale of existing structures and equipment and would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities could temporarily and intermittently produce noise at levels greater than current ambient conditions. Construction-related noise could be audible from Cascade Cemetery and a few private residences near North Bonneville Substation. Noise impacts would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Standard construction BMPs would minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human health and 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: 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: North Bonneville Substation is BPA fee-owned property, and the proposed action would not impact adjacent properties. No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

December 13, 2021

Date