

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Buckley Substation Disconnect Switch Additions

**Project No.:** P03999

**Project Manager:** Erich Orth, TEPP-TPP-1

**Location:** Sherman County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.7 Electronic equipment; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities; B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install three new motor operated disconnect switches, a new bus configuration, and relaying equipment at BPA's existing Buckley Substation in Sherman County, Oregon. BPA would also install relaying equipment at the following BPA substations:

- Grizzly Substation in Jefferson County, Oregon
- Marion Substation in Marion County, Oregon
- Slatt Substation in Gilliam County, Oregon

The proposed project would provide operational flexibility by isolating Buckley Substation and allowing three, 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines (Buckley-Grizzly No. 1, Buckley-Marion No. 1, and Slatt-Buckley No. 1) to bypass Buckley Substation in the event of a partial or complete failure of substation equipment.

All ground disturbance at Buckley Substation (i.e., excavation to install new footings, grounding, and conduit) would occur within the existing, fenced substation yard. No excavation would extend beyond the perimeter previously disturbed during construction and installation of the substation, and excavated material would be stored temporarily onsite and then used for backfill. No existing equipment or footings would be removed or replaced. General equipment used would include cranes, excavators, bulldozers, dump trucks, vacuum trucks, and substation maintenance vehicles.

All relaying equipment installations proposed at Buckley, Grizzly, Marion, and Slatt substations would occur within existing racks inside the control houses and no major interior or exterior building modifications would be required.

**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/ Walker Stinnette

Walker Stinnette, EC-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange                      April 15, 2022

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.

**Proposed Action:** Buckley Substation Disconnect Switch Additions

## **Project Site Description**

The proposed action would require work at four existing BPA substations. The primary project site is located on BPA fee-owned property at Buckley Substation in Sherman County, Oregon (Township 4 South, Range 15 East, Section 11). All proposed actions, including any material laydown or equipment staging, would occur within the existing footprint of the fenced substation yard, which has been heavily disturbed and consists of compacted, non-native rock and is maintained clear of vegetation. No wetlands or water bodies are present within 500 feet of the project site. Outside of the substation yard, the surrounding area is primarily characterized by agricultural land use interspersed with isolated, undeveloped grasslands.

All proposed actions at the following substations would occur inside the existing control houses:

- Grizzly Substation within BPA's easement on the United States Forest Service (USFS) Ochoco National Forest in Jefferson County, Oregon (Township 12 South, Range 14 East, Section 35)
- Marion Substation on BPA fee-owned property in Marion County, Oregon (Township 9 South, Range 1 East, Donation Land Claims 46, 47, and 55)
- Slatt Substation on BPA fee-owned property in Gilliam County, Oregon (Township 3 North, Range 21 East, Section 35)

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Buckley, Grizzly, and Slatt substations are not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Although Marion Substation has been determined eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, the proposed undertaking would not alter the integrity or eligibility of the property. All ground-disturbing activities would occur within the previously-disturbed Buckley 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: Localized gravel and underlying soil disturbance would occur during construction in the existing substation yard. Standard erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sediment migration off site, including potential wind erosion. Any excess spoils

generated during project activities would be disposed of according to all local, state, and federal regulations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing 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: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard and would not require any permanent habitat disturbance or removal. Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. There are no known occurrences of any special-status wildlife species, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard, and no water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard, and no wetlands are present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands..

### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The limited ground excavation for footings in the existing gravel yard would not be expected to have any potential to reach groundwater or impact any local aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is consistent with current land uses, and the project site is not located in a specially-designated area. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact land use or specially-designated areas.

### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The equipment replacements would be similar in size and appearance to existing equipment, and the associated footing modifications in the substation yard would not have a noticeable impact on the baseline visual quality at the site.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities could result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and emissions in the local area. Standard wind erosion and sediment controls would be implemented to minimize dust, as needed. There would be no change to air quality after construction is completed.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is in an isolated, rural area surrounded by active agricultural fields. The activities in the substation yard are consistent with routine operation and maintenance of an electric facility. During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities could temporarily and intermittently produce noise at levels higher than current ambient conditions. 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: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout project construction, and standard construction best management practices 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: The proposed action would occur on BPA fee-owned properties (Buckley, Marion, and Slatt substations) or on property where BPA has an existing easement with the United States Forest Service (Grizzly Substation). 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/ Walker Stinnette April 15, 2022  
Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC