

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Ellensburg TLM District FY19 Wood Pole Replacements (*Update to Previous CX issued November 21, 2019*)

Project No.: 4107

Project Manager: Dianne Bonner – TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Chelan County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to perform in-kind replacement of 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 existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augured to assure proper depth placement. Minor maintenance along existing access road prisms and landings is scheduled to be performed where necessary to facilitate safe access. No unauthorized construction activities would occur in any water body including streams, ponds, or wetlands. Access road maintenance may include blading, shaping, rocking, and construction of waterbars and drain dips. Refer to the table below for wood pole replacement locations. This CX has been updated to include Columbia-Valhalla 2 structure 5/10.

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County, State
Columbia-Valhalla 1	2/9	T21N R22E SEC17	Chelan, WA
	3/7	T21N R22E SEC8	Chelan, WA
	4/6, 4/9, 5/6	T21N R22E SEC6	Chelan, WA
	5/7, 5/10	T21N R22E SEC31	Chelan, WA
Columbia-Valhalla 2	3/7	T21N R22E SEC8	Chelan, WA
	4/9	T21N R22E SEC6	Chelan, WA
	5/7, 5/10	T21N R22E SEC31	Chelan, WA

The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would help reduce outage times and 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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel Date: August 5, 2022

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 area is located approximately 5 miles southeast of Malaga, Washington in the BPA Ellensburg district. The work would be performed within BPA easement on privately-owned land. The proposed work would occur within and adjacent to the ROW corridor on flat to hilly terrain. The project area is primarily surrounded by undeveloped land but also intersects some agricultural fields. The Columbia River is located approximately ¼ mile east of the project area and Colockum Creek intersects the project area, but is located approximately 200 feet from any proposed work. Several perennial streams also intersect the project area.

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 Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation on June 24, 2019. The project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist. No cultural resources were identified during the survey and BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect to historic properties. The Colville Tribe concurred with the determination on October 22, 2019, and DAHP concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on October 15, 2019, with the stipulation for an unanticipated discovery plan. No additional responses were received.

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 during wood pole replacements, landing improvements, and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be stabilized.

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 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. Listed fish species are found in the Columbia River and in Colockum Creek. 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. The maximum depth of disturbance would be approximately 12 feet below ground surface and groundwater is at a depth of approximately 200 feet below ground surface.

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 and on existing access roads. 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

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change. The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines 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 within 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/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz – EPR-Bell-1
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: August 5, 2022