

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lynn Lake Radio Station Antenna and Radio Equipment Installation

Project No.: P01237

Project Manager: Rian Dustan, TTBP-DITT-2

Location: King County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install VHF two-way radio equipment at the Lynn Lake Communications Site in King County, Washington. The project would be one of many VHF repeater installations throughout the BPA transmission service territory under a mobile radio upgrade program (Mobile REDI). BPA would lease space in the Washington State Patrol's (WSP) communications building at the site and on the WSP 100-foot-tall communication tower. A new VHF whip antenna would be placed at the top of the tower and would be used to test and verify functioning of the new VHF radio system for the Puget Sound Mobile REDI Region. New coaxial cable would be run on the tower to connect the antenna to a new VHF radio repeater BPA would install in an existing component rack inside the building. The cable would run through an existing wall port and be bonded to the existing ground bar near the port. No heavy equipment would be used and the tower would be climbed by personnel without the aid of a crane or lift. Work would occur over two days in October 2022.

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/ Michael J. O'Connell

Michael O'Connell
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

September 30, 2022

Date

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

Lynn Lake Communications Site sits at about 4,300 feet above sea level and is surrounded by industrial forest in various stages of regrowth. There are various small lakes in the surrounding terrain, while only an intermittent stream is within a few hundred feet of the site. Multiple entities have established communications stations in the graveled yard of the site.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA has determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties. There would be no disturbance of potential archaeological resources and the work and the final built elements would be in keeping with the current character of the station.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance from the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The communications site where all work would take place is treated to remove vegetation to maintain electrical grounding integrity of the facilities. Within two miles of the site, there is Washington State-listed forest type of concern – the Western Hemlock - (Western Redcedar) / Devil's-club / Swordfern Swamp Forest – but there would be no work occurring off the developed communications site. There would be no effect to sensitive vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some banging noise would be generated on the tower that could disturb wildlife. There is northern spotted owl critical habitat 3.5 miles away, and there are historical observations of the Endangered Species Act-listed threatened bird in the area. However,

all work is to take place after the breeding season that ended on September 30th; therefore, there would be no effect on northern spotted owl. Any disruption of and resultant alteration of normal activities of this or other species in the immediate vicinity would be limited to daylight working hours over the course of two days. This disturbance type and duration would not be unlike normal maintenance procedures at any of the site's stations. A search of Washington Natural Heritage data in a two-mile radius resulted in no records of State Sensitive wildlife species. There would be no effect to sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water sources or water bodies affected by the work.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands in a communications site.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The site is on Washington Department of Natural Resources Land. The uses proposed by BPA would fall under the WSP site lease conditions. There would be no conflict of uses, and new facilities would be compatible with the existing communications site usage.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A 20-foot-tall, three-inch-diameter VHF whip antenna at the top of a 100-foot-tall lattice steel tower would not be inconsistent with the appearance as seen now by an average bystander.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pickup trucks needed for the work would produce exhaust, but in no greater quantities than would be produced during regular maintenance activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Metal banging would be heard in the vicinity during the work; however, the volume and duration would blend in as normal maintenance activities on communications facilities.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Workers would be aware of and follow all applicable BPA and OSHA safety guidance.

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 performed all the necessary coordination with WSP and would account for any lease conditions as pertains to the planned work.

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

Signed: /s/ Michael J. O'Connell September 30, 2022
Michael J. O'Connell Date
Environmental Protection Specialist