

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Olympia District, Chehalis TLM, 2020 (2023) Priority Wood Pole and Static Wire Replacements

PP&A No.: 4898

Project Manager: Jeffrey Hurt - TEPL-TPP-2

Location: Lewis County, 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 seven deteriorating wood pole structures and any associated hardware and guys at specific locations in BPA's Olympia District. For all structures, the work would include removing the existing wood pole structures (and guy wires if present) and replacing them with in-kind in the same location.

Where needed, the project also includes improvements to existing access roads and landings associated with the transmission line rights-of-way that currently may inhibit access at the specified locations for routine maintenance. Dependent on the structure location and access road conditions, the project may include surface improvements of existing road surfaces and landings (blading and rocking) as well as improvements and in-kind replacements of existing drainage features.

The proposed action also includes replacement of the static wire in the first mile of the Chehalis-Olympia No. 1 from 1/1 to 1/14. New wire would be pulled in using the existing structures and wire. No ground-disturbing activities are necessary for this work.

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/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts, EPR-Olympia
Physical Scientist - Environmental

Concur:

/s/ Sarah Beigel

Sarah Biegel Date: April 25, 2023
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 Descriptions

All structure replacement projects would be at specific locations in Lewis County, Washington in BPA's Olympia Maintenance District. All work would be done in existing managed rights-of-way that cross private rural residential and agricultural lands. Site-specific locations and details are listed in the following table.

Transmission Line	Structure(s)	Township	Range	Section	Land Use
Chehalis-Olympia No. 1 Priority poles	1/4, 1/5, 1/6, 1/11	13N	2W	20	Rural Residential/Ag
	1/12, 1/13	13N	2W	17	Rural Residential/Ag
	12/3	15N	3W	35	Rural Residential/Ag
Chehalis-Olympia No. 1 Static replacement	1/1 to 1/3	13N	2W	21	Rural Residential/Ag
	1/4 to 1/11	13N	2W	20	Rural Residential/Ag
	1/12 to 1/14	13N	2W	17	Rural Residential/Ag

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On January 5, 2021, BPA engaged in consultation with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Indians, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for the project locations. The project areas were surveyed by a BPA archaeologist. On December 2, 2021, determination letters were sent which stated no historic properties would be affected by project activities to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Indians, and the Washington DAHP. The Washington DAHP concurred with the final determination on December 3, 2021. No additional responses were received. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological staff (BPA, THPOs, and WA DAHP) would be contacted.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The structure replacements involve removing the old poles and replacing them in kind at the same location. No substantial ground disturbance is required. Upon completion of project activities, any disturbed sites would be stabilized with native seed mix, or erosion control materials. Where needed due to the potential for degraded road conditions, the project also may include improvements to existing access roads and landings associated with the transmission line structures. This may include on and off right-of-way roads where BPA

currently has access rights. Access road maintenance may include surface improvements including light blading and rocking, as well as improvements and/or in-kind replacements of existing drainage features, small cross drain culverts, water bars, and ditches. Stormwater BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues. No lasting impacts are anticipated from the access road improvements as this work would stabilize any degraded roads.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur within the open transmission line corridor with the underlying properties maintained as rural residential and agricultural use. Minimal vegetation may be removed or crushed at the pole location sites. Where needed due to the potential for degraded road conditions, the project also may include improvements to existing access roads and landings associated with the transmission line structures. This may include on and off right-of-way roads where BPA currently has access rights. Access road maintenance may include surface improvements including light blading and rocking, as well as improvements and/or in-kind replacements of existing drainage features, small cross drain culverts, water bars, and ditches. Any road work would occur on existing roads that are maintained for vehicle use.

Some common native and non-native plants at the structure locations may be temporarily impacted. Disturbance would be surficial and these plants would be expected to recover naturally through propagation and via the existing seed bank in the area. Disturbed sites would be restored with native seed mix.

No special-status plants or Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plants would be impacted from project activities. Under Section 7 of the ESA, BPA obtained an official species list from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on March, 9, 2023. No ESA-listed plant species are present in the project areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA obtained official species lists for the project locations in Lewis County, Washington from the USFWS on March 9, 2023. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor with little wildlife habitat. Where needed due to the potential for degraded road conditions, the project also may include improvements to existing access roads and landings associated with the transmission line structures. This may include on and off right-of-way roads where BPA currently has access rights. Access road maintenance may include surface improvements including light blading and rocking, as well as improvements and/or in-kind replacements of existing drainage features, small cross drain culverts, water bars, and ditches. During project activities, work with heavy equipment may cause temporary disturbance to wildlife causing avoidance of the area. The disturbance would be of a short duration and would not affect any species' long-term activities.

No project locations are within or near any designated critical habitats on known occupied sites for listed species. Due to the lack suitable habitat and no known presence in the project areas, BPA has determined that the projects would have “no effect” on ESA-listed species or their critical habitat. No other special-status wildlife would be impacted by project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work or ground disturbance near waterways is proposed. Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Three structure locations, 1/12, 1/13, and 1/14, are located within a small wetland complex. Potentially, the sites would be dry during the proposed work window. Additionally, wooden matting would be placed at the structure locations within the wetland boundary for access and heavy equipment. The work at each location is of a short duration, 1-2 days, and the matts would be removed at the completion of the work. Some vegetation may be temporarily impacted by crushing; however, long-term impacts are not anticipated.

Additionally the replacement structures, 1/12 and 1/13, would incorporate pole butt wraps and be placed inside culverts to minimize the potential for contaminants to leach into the wetland.

No additional proposed sites, including any access road maintenance, are located within or near wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. All spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project locations are confined to the existing transmission line ROW corridors and off ROW access roads with legal rights. Surrounding land uses include private rural residential and agricultural properties and would not be impacted. Project locations do not include any specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions at existing facilities would not alter or effect visual quality. Structure replacements are in-kind and would not be visibly different from the existing structures.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project work would be of a short duration and involve normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions are expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be located away from any populated areas. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is considered normal construction and maintenance.

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: Notifications via mailed letters would be sent to all current landowners approximately 3-8 weeks prior to project initiation. The letters provide contact information for BPA to allow feedback from landowners/managers concerning the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Greg Tippetts
Greg Tippetts, EPR-Olympia
Physical Scientist, Environmental

Date: April 25, 2023