

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Transmission Line Marker Ball Replacement Phase 4: Addendum A (*Update to previous CX issued on 17 March 2023*)

Project Manager: Dianne Bonner - TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Garfield County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B1.9 Airway Safety Markings and Painting; B3.2 Aviation activities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes four revised pulling and tensioning sites on the Central Ferry-Lower Granite No.2 transmission line in Garfield County. No other changes as described in the Transmission Line Marker Ball Replacement Phase 4 CX dated March 17, 2023 are proposed. The locations of the pulling and tensioning sites for Phase 4 of the Marker Ball Replacement Project in group A were shifted after Applied Archaeological Research, Inc. (AAR) completed their initial inventory of landing zones and pulling and tensioning sites. These locations had to be shifted due to issue with the original geospatial files provided to AAR. Several of the spans were depicted as one-span off of where the marker balls were actually located. The four revised sites were the only incorrect locations that would not work for their intended purpose.

No cultural resources or historic properties were identified at the four revised locations as a result of AAR's inventory.

The four revised locations remain within the scope of work previously identified during the environmental review. BPA has determined that the original "No Effect" determination for this undertaking remains appropriate.

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/ Anthony Gibson

Anthony Gibson

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 21, 2023

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 four revised pulling and tensioning locations are within BPA's right of way (ROW) along the Central Ferry-Lower Granite No.2 transmission line. The line spans hilly terrain and several tributaries of the Snake River. The area consists of both state and private land of which use is primarily agriculture. Pulling and tensioning sites are temporary sites that use an area approximately 250 feet long by 100 feet wide (right-of-way width) and would be located at previously established locations around the structures identified in Table 1 below. See Table 1 below for Township, Range, Section Number, and County information.

Table 1. Township, Range, Section Number, and County Information

Line Corridor	LZ Designation	Structure(s)	Township, Range, Section	WA Counties
Central Ferry-Lower Granite No. 2	CFLG PS-1 REV	6/2	T13N, R40E, SEC12	Garfield
	CFLG PS-2 REV	10/4	T13N, R41E, SEC11	Garfield
	CFLG PS-3 REV	17/1	T14N, R42E, SEC35	Garfield
	CFLG PS-4 REV	17/2	T14N, R42E, SEC35	Garfield

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Following a review of the potential project impacts to cultural resources, BPA has determined that this undertaking would result in No Historic Properties Affected or No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties.

The BPA Historian review has shown that marker ball replacement is considered normal, in-kind repair work and would not adversely affect the National Register eligibility of any transmission lines.

BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Hanford Tribes Technical Working Group (Hanford Tribes, which is comprised of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Wanapum Band), the Washington Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), on October 7, 2022. Washington DAHP provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effects (APE) via a letter dated October 11, 2022. BPA sent a no historic properties affected determination on February 2, 2023, and Washington DAHP concurred in a letter dated February 3, 2023. BPA subsequently shared an addendum report with consulting parties for four

revised pulling and tensioning sites in Garfield County, prepared by Applied Archaeological Research, Inc. (AAR Report No. 2639 A-2). No historic properties were identified. On April 21, 2023, BPA sent a letter to consulting parties confirming that the original effects determination of no historic properties affected remained appropriate. DAHP concurred in a response letter dated April 24, 2023. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Under Federal law, BPA has the responsibility to protect cultural resources that are inadvertently discovered on federally-owned land or during federally-funded projects. Should cultural resources be encountered during project implementation, all activity would be immediately discontinued and BPA cultural resource staff would be contacted. BPA's cultural resources staff would work with tribes and the California SHPO to address the inadvertent discovery as quickly as possible.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance is anticipated for this project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. Vegetation may be crushed in those locations where equipment would be accessing marker balls. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or other sensitive species are anticipated.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have minimal impacts to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to ESA-listed, state-listed or other sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities are proposed in any river, stream, or other waterbody along the project and no riparian vegetation would be impacted. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed fish species.

Notes: Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located in vehicles and landing zones used for this project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities in wetlands are proposed.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated due to the lack of ground disturbance.

Notes: Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located in vehicles and landing zones used for this project.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact existing land uses. There would not be any recreational or operational disruptions.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a minimal impact to visual quality. Replacement marker balls would be similar to the existing marker balls, and consistent with other marker balls along the transmission line.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicular emissions and dust may occur temporarily during this project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary noise from helicopter use and associated project activities would be expected. Helicopter use 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: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the previously established 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 and environment staff have coordinated the proposed project activities with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Hanford Tribes Technical Working Group (Hanford Tribes, which is comprised of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Wanapum Band), the Washington Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP).

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

Signed: /s/ Anthony Gibson Date: June 21, 2023
Anthony Gibson – EPI-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)