

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** The Dalles District FY20 and FY21 Wood Pole Replacement

**PP&A Project No.:** 4944

**Project Manager:** Alla Kisanova – TELP-TPP

**Location:** Sherman, Wheeler, and Gilliam Counties, OR; Klickitat and Skamania Counties, WA.

**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) proposes to replace 58 deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on selected transmission lines throughout the BPA The Dalles District (see structure list in the Categorical Exclusion Checklist). Replacement would be in-kind and would utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger would be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement.

Maintenance of selectected access roads would be required within the existing road prism to allow for safe working conditions. Access road maintenance would be performed on approximately 11 miles of existing access roads. Maintenance would include grading and compacting existing road surface as well as hauling, placing, shaping of additional crushed rock, and adding waterbars as needed. Landing construction would be required at approximately 80 locations within the project area to achieve a 30-foot by 40-foot landing area. General equipment used for this type of work includes graders, rollers, bulldozers, and dump trucks. The access road improvements would preserve and repair the existing road, maintain roadway safety, and manage storm water run-off. Landings may require debris removal, leveling, and surface rocking.

The project 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, July 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/ Fred Walasavage*

Fred Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Katey Grange*

Katey Grange Date: August 28, 2023

NEPA Compliance Officer – EC-4

Attachment(s):

Effects Determination for T&E Species

## 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:** The Dalles District FY20 and FY21 Wood Pole Replacement

### Project Site Description

The project activities would be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights-of-way. The sites are located on State Department of Natural Resources-managed lands and private lands. Adjacent land uses primarily consist of agriculture and range. The project area is a mix of flat and gently sloped lands with periodic small canyons. Vegetation consists of steppe shrubs and grasses.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	14/5, 14/6 14/7	3N	14E	12	Klickitat, WA	Private/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	14/8, 15/1 15/2, 15/3 15/4, 15/5 15/6,15/7 15/8	3N	14E	1	Klickitat, WA	Private/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	16/1, 16/2 16/3, 16/4 16/5, 16/6	4N	14E	36	Klickitat, WA	State DNR/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	16/7, 16/8 17/1	4N	15E	31	Klickitat, WA	Private/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	17/2, 17/3	4N	15E	30	Klickitat, WA	Private/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	19/3	4N	15E	29	Klickitat, WA	Private/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	20/7, 21/4	4N	15E	22	Klickitat, WA	Private/Range
Chenoweth – Goldendale No.1	24/2, 24/3 24/4	4N	16E	19	Klickitat, WA	Private/Agriculture
Big Eddy-DeMoss No.1	6/7, 6/8, 7/1, 7/2	1N	14E	1	Sherman, OR	Private/Agricultural
Big Eddy-DeMoss No.1	20/13, 20/14 20/15, 21/3 21/11	1N	16E	36	Sherman, OR	Private/Agricultural
Big Eddy-DeMoss No.1	22/14	1N	17E	31	Sherman, OR	Private/Agricultural

DeMoss-Fossil No. 1	1/4, 1/5, 1/6, 1/7, 1/8	1S	17E	3	Sherman, OR	Private/Agricultural
DeMoss-Fossil No. 1	26/10,	3S	20E	5	Gilliam OR	Private/Agricultural
DeMoss-Fossil No. 1	28/1, 28/2, 28/3, 28,4	3S	20E	9	Gilliam OR	Private/Agricultural
DeMoss-Fossil No. 1	28/5, 28/6	3S	20E	16	Gilliam OR	Private/Agricultural
DeMoss-Fossil No. 1	50/7, 51/1	6S	21E	16	Wheeler OR	Private/Agricultural
Big Eddy-Quenett Creek-1	5/9	2N	13E	21	Klickitat WA	Private/Range
Underwood Tap to Bonneville PH 1-Alcoa-1&2	26/6, 26/7 26/8, 26/9	3N	10E	15	Skamania WA	Private/Timber

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation on October 17, 2022. Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via a letter dated August 17, 2023. BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on July 19, 2023. ODOT concurred on July 26, 2023, DAHP concurred on July 27, 2023, and OR SHPO concurred on August 17, 2023. No additional response was received within 30 days.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would require minimal ground disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, plant species within the project area. Minimal vegetation removal is expected for the new landings and any disturbed areas outside of the new landings would be reseeded.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation No special-status, including ESA-listed, species and habitats were identified within the project area. No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species. Wildlife in the project area would experience temporary, short-term disturbance associated with elevated noise levels and construction vehicle presence.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in project area.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No contact with groundwater. The proposed work is in an upland area; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 10 feet below ground surface.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use with the minor exception of the new landings. No specially designated areas identified.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: New wood poles would be similar to existing structures would not be noticeably different than existing structures. Landing and road improvements would result in minimal visual changes that are consistent with the existing transmission infrastructure.

#### **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

#### **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No long-term impact since construction noise would be temporary and localized.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. The proposed action 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: Notification letters would be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to landowner prior to work.

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

Signed: /s/ Fred Walasavage      Date: August 28, 2023  
Fred Walasavage  
Environmental Protection Specialist