

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Mt. Spokane Fence and Wall Installation and Radio Tower Removal

Project No.: P02580

Project Manager: Micaiah Watkins

Location: Spokane County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B1.11 Fencing; B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to remove and replace the current chain-link security fence and permanently remove the existing SPOK03 radio tower and its adjoining 144 square-foot concrete tower footing at the Mount Spokane radio site in Spokane, Washington.

The current chain-link security fence surrounding the BPA radio facility would be removed and replaced. The proposed new fence would be constructed of two separate materials, would consist of 8-foot tall spans, and would encompass BPA's existing facility and leased footprint. The north and east side boundary of the radio site would consist of an 8-foot tall chain-link fabric filled fence with standard in-kind fence pier footings, angled barbed wire top, and a span of approximately 80 feet by 50 feet total in length. The south and west side radio site boundary would consist of a 6-inch wide by 8-foot tall concrete masonry unit (CMU) wall and would span approximately 80 feet by 50 feet total in length. The proposal includes the installation of two new access gates; one 6-foot wide gate on the south east corner of the fence, and one 4-foot wide gate on the east side of the proposed fence. The removal of the radio tower concrete footing, the installation of new concrete footings for the CMU wall, and the removal and installation of in-kind pier footings for the chain-link fence would require excavation and soil disturbance along the existing fence line surrounding BPA's radio site.

Temporary ground disturbance and excavation for the proposed fence, radio tower removal, and tower footing, would possibly extend 8 feet outside of BPA's existing fence footprint. Staging of materials, crane vehicle staging and operation, construction vehicle use, and forklift operation would occur on BPA's access and leased area on the southern portion of BPA's leased property. Excavated concrete and soil would be used for backfill or disposed of off BPA property in accordance with all applicable local, State, and Federal regulations. Temporarily disturbed areas during construction would be re-contoured and reseeded with an appropriate native seed mix.

Construction equipment would consist of a bucket truck or crane to assist in the removal of the radio tower, small excavator, tractor trailers, cement truck, forklift, light duty trucks, jackhammer, and powered hand tools.

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.

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel Date
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 BPA Mount Spokane Radio Station is maintained and located in Spokane, Washington. The project is located in Township 28 North, Range 45 East, and Section 16. The surrounding land use consists of State-managed park land consisting of public access trails, year round recreation, and mature tree stands. The project site consists of native and non-native grasses, a compacted gravel access area, and a paved public access road.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Spokane Tribe of Indians (Spokane Tribe), Washington State Parks, and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) on November 7, 2023. DAHP concurred with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and assigned the project number of 2023-11-07119 via letter on November 7, 2023. BPA sent a No Adverse Effect to historic resources determination on December 22, 2023, and WA State Parks and WA DAHP concurred via letters on December 28, 2023, and January 2, 2024, respectively. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

- BPA's Post-Review Discovery Procedures would be included as a condition of BPA's construction package. In the event that cultural material is unexpectedly encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by a professional archaeologist.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be a moderate amount of soil disturbance for the installation of the new chain-link fence, concrete masonry wall, and the removal of the radio tower footing. Some digging at an estimated depth of 3 feet and 4 feet wide is expected. Work would be occurring within the established BPA leased property.

Notes:

- Soil removed would be used for backfill, extra soil would be disposed of at a state and federally approved facility.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Moderate ground disturbance is anticipated. The project would be occurring in the BPA leased area which is currently managed for low-growing vegetation. There are no listed or special-status species present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would be in established BPA leased area. Construction of the fence and tower removal is expected to occur during daytime hours with limited to no effect to any listed, non-listed, or special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No associated wetlands or waterbodies occur within or the surrounding area of the project activities or construction. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and fish would occur.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetland activity or presence is associated within the surrounding area of the project activities or construction. No impacts to wetlands would occur.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The shallow digging involved would have no impact to groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use or specially-designated areas as a result of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area and surrounding environment due to the installation of the fence and concrete masonry wall. The color aspect of the cement wall would consist of a nature-based palette to augment the natural surroundings and environment. The radio tower removal would have a positive visual quality impact to the project area and Mount Spokane Radio site.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to air quality are anticipated as a result of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected for this area as a result of this project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated from the result of this project.

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

