

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lapine-Fort Rock No. 1 structure 1/5 fire damaged pole replacement

PP&A No.: 6932

Project Management: BPA Redmond District – TFR

Location: Deschutes, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace structure 1/5 on the Lapine-Fort Rock No. 1 transmission line with in-kind replacement of a wood pole and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) in the Redmond Transmission Line Maintenance (TLM) District.

The structure was damaged by a forest fire in 2024. The replacement pole would be placed approximately 5 feet ahead or back on line from the existing structure. BPA would drill the pole holes and then install and remove the old structure. Where needed, the project also includes improvements to the existing access road accessing the transmission line right-of-way. Dependent on the access road conditions, the project may include surface improvements (blading and rocking) as well as improvements to and in-kind replacements of existing drainage features. Access road improvements would stay within the previously-developed road footprint. One approximately 50-foot by 50-foot landing may be constructed (bladed and rocked) at the structure location.

This structure was identified as a potential risk to human safety and system reliability and would be replaced in order to remain in compliance with NERC, WECC and BPA's work standards and guides. The proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.102 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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National*

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B and C of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. ¹

/s/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer Date: October 17, 2025

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to the interim final rule to revise DOE NEPA regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 and NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

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: Lapine-Fort Rock No. 1 structure 1/5 fire damaged pole replacement

Project Site Description

The project would replace structure 1/5 of the Lapine-Fort Rock No. 1 that was damaged by a forest fire in 2024. The structure replacement is located in Deschutes County Oregon in BPA's Redmond Maintenance District. All work would be done in existing managed rights-of-ways. The structure is located on US Forest Service-managed land in the Deschutes National Forest. Site-specific locations and details are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Structure replacements in the Idaho Falls District.

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County/State	Land Management
Lapine-Fort Rock No. 1	1/5	OR T22S R11 E SEC19	Deschutes, OR	US Forest Service, Deschutes National Forest

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: Yes

Explanation:

BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO), the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Klamath Tribe, the US Forest Service, Deschutes National Forest, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), on February 25, 2025. The Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE). No other responses were received by BPA. BPA sent a no effect to historic resources determination on February 27, 2025, to the consulting parties. The OR SHPO and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon concurred with the determination within the required 30-day period. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently 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 BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties. The BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager would be immediately notified. Reasonable measures would be taken to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
- Oregon SHPO requested that BPA crews follow the Post-Review Discovery Procedure.
- The USFS just requested that the work stay within the ROW.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The wood pole replacement would be in-kind and would be placed near the location of the existing poles. Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements, landing

construction, and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary. Sites would be restored to pre-existing conditions following the construction activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would be limited to the already impacted ROW and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. A forest fire through the area in 2024 burned all of the vegetation in the area of the project. The USFS used heavy equipment to tear up vegetation throughout the right of way including the project location, creating a fire break. Plant communities have not recovered from the fire.

BPA obtained official species lists Under Section 7 of the ESA, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project areas on October 7, 2025. No ESA-listed plant species are present in the project areas. No federal special-status, state-listed, or sensitive plants are present in the project areas. However, if any federal or state listed plant species are unknowingly in the project area, project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and access roads and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA obtained official species lists Under Section 7 of the ESA, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project location in Deschutes County, Oregon on October 7, 2025. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor with little wildlife habitat. During project activities, work with heavy equipment may cause temporary disturbance to wildlife causing short term 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: The project is not located near any water bodies, rivers or floodplains. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to stabilize the project sites during and after the maintenance activities to avoid off-site movement of sediment.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is not located near any wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to increase any impacts to groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below the ground surface. Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities to avoid creating a pathway for groundwater contamination.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project location is confined to the existing transmission line right-of-way corridor. The project is on USFS managed land. No recreational areas would be impacted. Project work location would be localized to the existing wood pole transmission structure and would not substantially impact the underlying property in the short or long term. The project location does not include any specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line ROW. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in-kind and near the previous pole locations. The project would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Short-term impacts to air quality could occur from dust generated by construction activities and vehicle emissions. However, construction crews would be required to manage dust generation, and impacts from increased vehicle use would be temporary and limited.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change. The project area is also remote and it is located away from recreational sites and most human activity.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery 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: BPA Realty has coordinated with the USFS in accordance with the MOU between the USFS and BPA.

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

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: October 17, 2025