

# memorandum

DATE: March 7, 2011

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

to: Cheryl C. Randall – TPC-TPP-4

**Proposed Action:** Birch Creek Radio Tower

**Budget Information:** Work Order #257258

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):**

B4.6 “Additions or modifications to electric power transmission facilities that would not affect the environment beyond the presviously developed facility area including... replacement of poles...”

**Location:** Bonneville County, ID – Section 2, Township 2 South, Range 41 East of the Heise SE Quadrangle

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to install a new 50-ft radio tower within the existing Birch Creek Radio Station property in order to communicate with Utah Associated Municipal Power System’s (UAMPS) new 100-MW Horse Butte Wind Power Generating Facility. BPA would also install telemetry and communication equipment within UAMPS’s Horse Butte control house. Electrical generation produced from the Horse Butte Wind project would interconnect into BPA’s transmission system via a tap between towers 31/6 and 31/7 of BPA’s Palisades-Goshen 115-kV transmission line.

All ground disturbing activities would be located within previously leveled and graded land and no new access roads or staging areas would be required.

**Findings:** BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

In addition to all soil disturbing activities being located on previously leveled and graded land, a cultural resource report encompassing the entire area of potential effect (APE) was produced for BPA in 1986.

The report indicates that no cultural resource sites, features, or artifacts were found at or near the Birch Creek Radio Station. BPA therefore determined that this project would have no effect on cultural resources. On January 28, 2011 a letter was sent to the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to seek concurrence regarding BPA's no effects determination. A concurrence letter was received from the Idaho SHPO that was dated February 2, 2011.

The project area is absent of water features, unique wildlife habitat, or other environmentally sensitive resources. Because of the previous disturbance and lack of habitat, no ESA species listed or proposed for listing are likely to be present. There would also be no effect to floodplains or wetlands. It was therefore determined that no adverse environmental effects would occur from construction of the project.

Based on the provision identified on the attachment below this proposed action meets the requirements for the categorical exclusions referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Michael B. Henjum

Michael B. Henjum

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: March 7, 2011

Attachments:

Provisions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

## Provisions

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

### **Cultural resources:**

1. Should archaeological materials be unexpectedly encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:
  - Stop work and immediately notify the Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) and a qualified archaeologist. In addition, all concerned Tribes and appropriate county, state, federal agencies should be notified.
  - Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
  - Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site.
  - Take reasonable steps to restrict access to the site of discovery.

### **Vegetation protection and noxious weeds:**

2. Restrict construction activities to the area needed to work effectively. Construction crews will be instructed to restrict vehicles to designated areas and existing roads as much as possible.
3. Designated areas will be used to store equipment and supplies. The contractor will follow applicable state and federal regulations to protect plant communities.
4. After construction, disturbed areas not needed for ongoing access or maintenance will be promptly reseeded with native species where possible.
5. Seed mix for revegetation will contain a mixture of the common native bunchgrasses and dryland species present in the project area. Native seed is commercially available for this area.
6. Do not spread noxious weed seeds:
  - Certify in writing that all vehicles, equipment, and machinery are free of all weeds including seeds before moving the equipment into the construction area. The COTR will inspect vehicles prior to bringing them on site.
  - When an area contaminated by weeds is encountered on, or off of, the construction site, use caution to prevent the spreading of weeds to other areas. This may include cleaning the equipment with high-pressure water prior to moving from one work site to another, or installing wheel washes. Notify the COTR as to the location of the noxious weeds.
7. Use only weed-free materials, or inert materials for mulching and for erosion control.

### **Erosion control and land use:**

8. Require dust abatement on road and construction site, if necessary.
9. Appropriate erosion and sediment control best management practices will be utilized for the protection of water resources.
10. Provide a schedule of construction activities to all landowners/agencies along the corridor that could be affected by construction.
11. Plan and schedule construction activities, when practical, to minimize temporary disturbance, displacement of crops, and interference with farming activities.

12. Keep gates in as found condition (opened or closed). Coordinate construction sequence with landowner so that livestock may be moved if necessary.

**Public Health and Safety:**

13. Limit construction to daytime hours for noise abatement.
14. No equipment with un-muffled exhaust is allowed. Fit all equipment with sound-control devices that are as effective as the original equipment.
15. Should contaminated media be unexpectedly encountered during construction of the project, stop work and notify the COTR. Contaminated media include materials that are potentially harmful to the environment or human health and safety. Work will proceed only after measures approved by the state and local regulatory agencies are put in place to prevent the spread of contaminated materials and protect the health and safety of workers.
16. Equip vehicles with fire suppression equipment, including a shovel, fire extinguisher, and bladder or water supply.
17. Equip construction vehicles with spill containment kits able to respond to construction related spills.

## Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Birch Creek Radio Tower

Work Order #: 00257258

This project has been found to not adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect With Conditions
1. Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Note: Supporting documentation is in the Project file.**

Signed: /s/ Michael Henjum

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