

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: August 5, 2011

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dave Tripp – TEP-CSB-1

Proposed Action: Swan Valley - Palisades Communication Upgrade

Budget Information: Work Order # 00253530 Task 03

Categorical Exclusions Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021:

B1.7 “Acquisition, installation, operation, and removal of communication systems, data processing equipment, and similar electronic equipment.”

B4.6 “Additions or modifications to electric power transmission facilities...”

Location:

Township 2 North, Range 43 East, Sections 25 and 26 of the Swan Valley Quadrangle

Township 1 South, Range 45 East, Section 17 of the Palisades Dam Quadrangle

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to install new equipment for microwave communication between BPA’s Swan Valley Radio Station and Palisades Power House. This project is consistent with BPA’s effort to digitalize it’s communication system in order to improve transmission efficiency and reliability. Within the previously disturbed Swan Valley Radio Station site, BPA would install a new 60-ft communication tower and microwave antenna. The tower would be supported by a 3-ft deep concrete base that would cover approximately a 30 by 30-ft area. A new steel pole structure approximately 60-ft tall would also be installed on the side of an existing U.S. Bureau of Reclamation building located at the Palisades Power House site. Again, a microwave antenna would be attached to the new structure. Lastly, BPA would acquire the land rights to a 2,500 square foot plot of land near the Swan Valley Radio Station in order to install a Passive Repeater. Passive Repeaters are used as a means to deflect microwave radio communication from one radio to another when no direct line of sight is possible. Although no new access roads would be constructed, temporary access would be required to access the Passive Repeater site during the construction phase. Other than the installation of the Passive Repeater, all ground disturbing activities would occur within previously leveled and graded land. The Passive Repeater would be installed within previously disturbed, agricultural land.

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.

Based on a site survey and a detailed cultural resource report produced by a BPA in-house archaeologist covering the proposed area of potential effect, it was determined that no adverse effects to cultural resources would occur by this project. The cultural resource report and a summary letter were sent on July 1, 2011 to the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Snake River Area Office, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Middle Snake Field Office, and the Shoshone Bannock Tribes of Idaho. A concurrence letter dated July 17, 2011 was received from the SHPO regarding this cultural resource report. No response was received from the The Shoshone Bannock Tribes of Idaho or the Bureau of Reclamation offices.

The project area is absent of unique wildlife habitat, water features, 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 provisions 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: August 5, 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 COTR or site manager and a qualified archaeologist. In addition, all concerned Tribes and appropriate federal, state, and local agencies should be notified.
 - Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
 - Take reasonable steps to restrict access to the site of discovery.
 - Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site.

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.
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 or site manager 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 or site manager 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. 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:

12. Limit construction to daytime hours for noise abatement.
13. No equipment with un-muffled exhaust is allowed. Fit all equipment with sound-control devices that are as effective as the original equipment.
14. 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.
15. Equip vehicles with fire suppression equipment, including a shovel, fire extinguisher, and bladder or water supply.
16. Equip construction vehicles with spill containment kits able to respond to construction related spills.

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Swan Valley - Palisades Communication Upgrade

Work Order #: 253530

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

Date: August 5, 2011