

United States Government  
**memorandum**

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

DATE: July 11, 2012

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Ben Deschuytter  
Project Manager – TEP-CSB-1

**Proposed Action:** Metaline Radio Station Upgrade Project

**Categorical Exclusions Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):**  
B1.19– Siting/construction/operation of microwave/radio communication towers

**Location:** Metaline Falls, Pend Orielle County, WA  
Township 40N, Range 43E, Section 31

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to upgrade its Metaline Radio Station in the Sullivan Lake Ranger District of the Colville National Forest. BPA is coordinating with the US Forest Service (USFS) to ensure the existing land use agreement is modified to adequately address this proposed action. The proposed radio station upgrade would add a microwave tower and replace the existing communication building, electrical service, and propane tank with a new building and propane tank in adjacent locations on the same site. Project details include the following:

- The new building would be 645 square feet and constructed of wood, concrete, and metal. It would be about three times larger than the old building.
- The new propane tank would hold 2,000 gallons, with a blast wall installed between the new propane tank and other structures.
- The new microwave tower would be about 100 feet tall with a 576-square-foot concrete base. (The installation of a new radio tower would require two new beam paths that could require a small amount of tree topping near the edge of the site, though the height and location of the tower would likely preclude this based on site topography and existing tree clearings).
- A waveguide bridge would be installed to connect the tower to the building.
- The existing fence would be expanded by 4–12 feet on the south side, 8 feet on the northwest side, and 4 feet on the north side. This would increase the fenced area by about 792 square feet. The total fenced area would be approximately 0.1 acre.
- New electrical service would require conduit trenching to about a 40 inch depth for a distance of about 15 feet within the radio station yard.
- The access road may need to be improved to support construction equipment, supplies, and vehicles, but no widening of the road should be needed. Road improvements would be done in cooperation with the Colville National Forest.

Construction would be done on site, and the old building and tank would be removed once the new structures are fully functional. The majority of the project would take place over 3 months from July through September 2012, although the radio tower would likely be installed and the old infrastructure removed in 2015. Some soil excavation would likely be needed for the building foundation, propane tank, and microwave tower, while posts would be dug into the ground to support the bridge.

### **Analysis:**

BPA prepared a biological evaluation (BE) for the Colville National Forest, analyzing potential effects to federally listed species, USFS sensitive species, and USFS management indicator species (MIS) (USFS\_BE\_MetalineRadioStationUpgrade\_2012). Three federally threatened or endangered species have potential habitat in or near the project site and documented occurrences within 3 miles of the site, including Canada lynx, grizzly bear, and woodland caribou. The BE concluded that this project would have no effect on these or any other threatened or endangered species or their habitat, as documented in a No Effect Memo in response to the Endangered Species Act (Metaline\_ESA\_NoEffectMemo\_2012). It also found that the affected area contains habitat that could potentially be suitable for 13 USFS sensitive species and MIS, although only one species—wolverine—has been recently documented within a mile of the project site. The BE concluded that impacts to USFS sensitive species or MIS would be minimal and mostly temporary and would not likely cause a trend to federal listing. The BE was submitted to the Colville National Forest on March 9, 2012, and the Forest concurred with these determinations and found that the project would be consistent with the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, with provisions (included in the attached provisions).

In November 2011, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the State of Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). The Colville National Forest also initiated consultation with the Kalispel Tribe, the Spokane Tribe, and The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in April 2012. In May 2012, The Colville National Forest conducted background research on the natural and cultural landscape of the project area and its environs. The research revealed no historic properties were present, and none of the Tribes communicated any concerns about the project. Based on these findings, and pursuant to the 1997 Programmatic Agreement regarding The Management of Cultural Resources on National Forests in Washington State, the Colville National Forest determined that there would be no effect to historic properties. BPA agreed with this determination, and sent a letter notifying the DAHP of this determination in June 2012. The DAHP concurred in a letter dated July 11, 2012.

### **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, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011). 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, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, 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, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

Based on the provisions identified on the attachment, this proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer

Kara Hempy-Mayer  
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 11, 2012

Attachments:

Provisions  
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

## Provisions

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions pertaining to:

### **Land Use:**

1. Comply with all obligations and requirements set forth in the USFS land use permit, the USFS's Decision Memorandum, and all other associated documentation pertaining to this project.
2. Comply with all Forest Orders pertaining to:
  - sanitation, including the proper disposal of human waste, and packing out everything packed in
  - pets, in that no pets will be allowed at the project work sites
  - food storage, in that all food must be stored in a bear resistant container on site half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise.
  - other orders that apply.
3. Make the contractor aware of any USFS requirements at a pre-work meeting, and conduct field inspections for compliance.
4. Provide a schedule of construction activities to the appropriate USFS personnel at the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (contact Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189).
5. Restrict construction activities to the area needed to work effectively. All activities, staging areas, and vehicles will be kept within the BPA easement and on the existing access road, unless otherwise coordinated with the USFS.

### **Habitat and Special-Status Species:**

6. Restrict construction activities to the area needed to work effectively, and where possible, limit construction equipment to existing construction areas.
7. Clean and inspect all construction equipment to ensure that it is free of noxious weed species prior to moving equipment on-site.
8. Use only certified weed free erosion and sediment control materials. Materials must be approved by the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (contact Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189).
9. Use only certified weed free gravel. Gravel must be approved by the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (contact Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189).
10. Select vehicles for transporting materials and equipment to the site such that no tree removal or road excavation other than blading of the existing road surface is required.

11. To revegetate disturbed ground, use the following seed mix approved by the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (contact Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189). All seed is to be “Prohibited and Restricted Noxious Weed Free for the State of Washington.” A copy of the tag from the seed mix proposed for use will be provided to the Forest Service prior to seed application. Seeding must be done between April 15 and November 1.

**USFS-approved seed mix:**

- Sheep Fescue 4 lbs./ac.
  - Streambank Wheatgrass 4 lbs./ac.
  - Pubescent Wheatgrass 6 lbs./ac.
- Total 14 lbs./ac.

Substitutions may include:

- Western wheatgrass 4
- Dahurian wildrye 6
- Bluebunch wheatgrass 8
- Big bluegrass 2
- Sandberg bluegrass 2
- Cicer milk vetch 2

12. In the event any federally threatened or endangered species or USFS sensitive species are encountered during project activities (see Special-Status Species List\* below), the following actions should be taken:

- Stop work in the immediate vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead (Oden Jahn, 503-230-7501), other appropriate BPA project staff, and the contact person for the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189).
- Implement reasonable and prudent measures to protect the species found, if needed and safe to do so.

**Cultural Resources:**

13. In the event any archaeological or historic materials are encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:

- Stop work in the immediate vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead (Oden Jahn, 503-230-7501), appropriate BPA project staff, and the archaeologist for the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (Alicia Beat, 509-684-7000). A BPA archaeologist, interested Tribes, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies should also 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 and restrict access to the site of discovery.

## **Water Quality, Air Quality, and Soils:**

14. Manage all pH-modifying sources, fresh concrete, concrete washout areas, and concrete grinding and demolition to reduce exposure to stormwater runoff.
15. Incorporate erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) that are protective of water resources into any necessary improvements to access roads (restricted to grading and laying gravel).
16. Use all standard erosion and sediment control BMPs for any ground disturbances on-site to avoid/minimize excessive erosion, soil sloughing, and other surface alterations during the construction phase.
17. Remove any excess soil resulting from excavation and legally dispose of it off-site with the exception of topsoil: topsoil should be salvaged when possible and used to restore excavated areas to former grades to help retain the native seed bank present in the soils.
18. Collect, remove, and legally dispose of construction waste off-site.
19. In the event of a reportable spill or release to the environment, immediately notify the KEP environmental lead (Oden Jahn, 503-230-7501) and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, including the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189).
20. Maintain appropriate emergency spill response materials on-site to control unexpected and unanticipated releases of petroleum-based products or other hazardous materials. Have emergency supplies in an easily accessible location and clearly marked. Disposal of any spill material will be in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements.
21. Work with KEP environmental lead to determine whether hazardous materials such as asbestos or lead are present in existing structures, and if present, prepare a safety plan detailing handling and disposal of these materials prior to removal.

## **\*Special-Status Species List:**

### **Wildlife**

bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)  
Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*)  
fisher (*Martes pennanti*)  
great gray owl (*Strix nebulosa*)  
grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*)  
pygmy shrew (*Sorex hoyi*)  
red-tailed chipmunk (*Tamias ruficaudus*)  
Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)  
wolverine (*Gulo gulo luteus*)  
woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*)  
Great Basin fritillary (*Speyeria egleis*)  
Rosner's hairstreak (*Callophyrus nelsoni rosneri*)

### **Vegetation**

common twinpod (*Physaria didymocarpa* var. *didymocarpa*)  
Sandberg desert parsley (*Lomatium sandbergii*)  
treelike clubmoss (*Lycopodium dendroideum*)  
velvet-leaf blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtilloides*)

# Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Metaline Radio Station Upgrade

Work Order #: 303992

This project does **not** have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and 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 or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: /s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer

Date: July 11, 2012