

memorandum

DATE: June 28, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Charla Burke
Project Manager – TEP-TPP-1

Proposed Action: Lancaster Line and Load Project – LO311

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

B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

B4.7 Fiber optic cable

Location: Lancaster Substation, Kootenai County, Idaho; approximately 2.2 miles southwest of Rathdrum, Idaho, (Township 51 North, Range 5 West, Section 11).

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to add equipment to its existing Lancaster Substation, replace one transmission structure, modify one existing structure, and replace existing fiber optic cable. This work would allow Avista Corporation (Avista) to construct a short tap line (4 structures) to connect their 230-kilovolt (kV) Boulder-Rathdrum transmission line to the Lancaster Substation. Avista requested this connection to help manage power flows associated with its purchase of output from the existing Rathdrum Power, LLC's Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant (Rathdrum Power).

BPA would add two 230-kV power circuit breakers and two 230-kV tubular steel substation dead-end structures within the existing fenced, graveled yard of the Lancaster Substation. Immediately to the southeast of Lancaster Substation, the transmission corridor contains two BPA transmission lines, the Lancaster-Noxon #1 230 kV and the Bell-Lancaster #1 230-kV, and Avista's Boulder-Rathdrum and Beacon-Rathdrum double circuit 230-kV transmission lines. Within this transmission line corridor, Avista would construct four wood pole structures (consisting of 3 poles each) to support the new conductor between the substation and the Avista transmission line corridor. Guy wires for a BPA structure may need to be adjusted and an existing BPA wood pole structure would be replaced with a 5 to 10 foot taller steel structure in its current location.

In addition, the two existing overhead fiber optic cables between the Lancaster Substation and the Avista transmission line would be installed underground. The fiber optic cable trenches would be up to four feet deep, several feet wide, and approximately 800 feet long. Two new fiber vaults would be installed within the transmission line corridor next to existing BPA fiber vaults, for use by Avista. Fiber vaults require excavation of a hole approximately 125 cubic feet in size, to accommodate the 64 cubic foot vaults.

The area that could be disturbed by project activities includes approximately 13 acres. Disturbance would result from the movement of trucks and heavy equipment working within the transmission

line corridor. The area that would be excavated in order to bury fiber optic cable and vaults, install transmission line structures, and modify existing structures, would be less than one acre. The work area would be accessed using the existing substation access road off of North Greensferry Road. Existing access roads may require improvement.

Existing Environment - The 13-acre Project site is currently grazed by cattle and surrounding land uses include farmland and the Rathdrum Power Plant. The Project site is approximately 1.2 miles south of Highway 53. Some of the Project site is disturbed, including the area where transmission towers and fiber vaults were previously installed. Three buried, high-pressure, natural gas pipelines (two 42" diameter and one 36" diameter) are located immediately to the south of the Lancaster Substation and surface soils show evidence of the past excavation near the barbed wire fence that divides the Project site from the Substation. Vegetation on these piles is similar to the surrounding plant community, indicating they were deposited some time ago.



Photo 1. Overview of the Project site, looking north-northeast

To determine if any natural resources are present within the Project site, BPA contracted with WEST, Inc. to review available information and to survey for wetlands, rare species, and to describe the habitat. To determine if any cultural resources are present within the project site, BPA contracted with Historical Research Associates, Inc. (HRA) to review available information and survey for cultural resources. The results of these surveys are discussed by resource, below.

Vegetation - The vegetation on the Project site is primarily composed of non-native herbaceous species. One native bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) was found on site and several native pines, including lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) and ponderosa pine (*P. ponderosa*), which are scattered across the Project site. Some trees may be removed in work areas. Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), an Idaho noxious weed, makes up approximately 85% of the vegetation cover.

Wetlands and Floodplains –There are no streams or waterways mapped on the Project site. The closest waterway, East Greenacres Main Ditch, is located approximately 700 feet north of the Project site. The nearest 100-year floodplain, along Lost Creek, is more than one mile from the Project site.

There are no wetlands on the site according to National Wetland Inventory (NWI) data and as determined during site visits. The nearest NWI wetland is approximately 1,200 feet from the Project site. The soils mapped on the Project site are non-hydric silt loams of the Avonville series, a very deep, well drained soil formed in glacial outwash mixed with loess and volcanic ash. The archaeologist who visited the Project site on April 10, 2012 excavated three holes and found soils that meet the description of the Avonville series. There was no evidence of wetland hydrology or hydrophytic vegetation on the Project site during the May 7, 2012 site visit.

Rare Species and Critical Habitat –The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list of federally listed species in Kootenai County (dated August 17, 2011) includes four threatened or endangered species (Spaulding’s catchfly [*Silene spaldingii*], water howellia [*Howellia aquatilis*], bull trout, and Canada lynx) and two candidate species (yellow-billed cuckoo [*Coccyzus americanus*] and North American wolverine [*Gulo gulo*]).

The Project would have no effect on these species because, based on Idaho Natural Heritage Program records and a biologist site visit (May 10, 2012), the Project site does not provide potential habitat for these species. Spaulding’s catchfly habitat includes bunchgrass dominated grasslands, sagebrush steppe, and open-canopy pine stands that is not present. Water howellia is a floating aquatic annual that requires areas with slow-moving or ponded water, including ponds and depressional wetlands that are not present. Bull trout are found in cold water streams with stable channels, spawning gravel, and unblocked migratory channels; the closest waterway is approximately 700 feet from the Project site. Canada lynx require boreal forest and high-density populations of their primary prey species, snowshoe hares (*Lepus americanus*). Yellow-billed cuckoos are found in shrubby riparian areas but are now largely extirpated from western states and North American wolverines are found at high elevations in mountainous, high latitude regions of the west and require large tracts of undisturbed land and deep winter snows for maternal dens.

Cultural Resources – BPA determined that no cultural resources would be impacted by the Project based on a cultural resource survey conducted April 10, 2012 and consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and the Coeur d’Alene Tribe of the Coeur d’Alene Reservation.

The Idaho SHPO concurred with BPA’s Determination of No Historic Properties Affected (May 17, 2012) and a letter received from the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Spokane Tribe of Indians (May 16, 2012) stated that should any cultural resources be discovered during construction, that they be contacted and work in the area immediately cease. An Inadvertent Discovery Protocol (attached) would be followed during construction. BPA did not receive any comments from the other two consulting Tribes.

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/ Kimberly R. St.Hilaire
Kimberly R. St.Hilaire
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 28, 2012

3 Attachments:
Categorical Exclusion Checklist
Provisions
Inadvertent Discovery Protocol

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Lancaster Line and Load Project - GO311

Work Order #: 00257304

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"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

See Provisions and the Inadvertent Discovery Protocol, both attached.

Signed: /s/ Kimberly St.Hilaire

Date: June 28, 2012

Provisions

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

Weed Control: Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction, such as washing or spraying construction vehicles prior to leaving the site, to avoid or minimize the spread of weeds.

Cultural Resources: The BPA Inadvertent Discovery Protocol (attached) will be followed during construction.

BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
INADVERTENT DISCOVERY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES PROCEDURE

Under federal law, the BPA has the responsibility to protect cultural resources that are inadvertently discovered on federally owned land or during federally funded projects. This document is intended to be used by individuals working on BPA funded projects who, through the course of their work, might inadvertently discover cultural resources.

INADVERTENT DISCOVERY - If your work brings you into contact with any of the following cultural resources:

- Native American cultural artifacts – flakes, arrowheads, stone tools, bone tools, pottery, etc.
- Historic era artifacts – building foundations, homesteads, shipwrecks, mining camps, etc.
- Human skeletal remains and bone fragments

You must immediately discontinue all ground-disturbing activity. Do not touch or move the objects and maintain the confidentiality of the site.

Follow the procedures below and await further direction from BPA's Cultural Resources Staff.

CULTURAL RESOURCES DISCOVERY PROCEDURE:

- Stop any ground disturbing activity immediately. **This may be a crime scene.** When bone fragments or possible Native American artifacts are found, study the objects **WITHOUT disturbing, touching, or moving them.** Removing bone fragments, artifacts, and other items from any archaeological site, without proper authorization, is **against the law.** Violators could be charged in state or federal court resulting in a fine or imprisonment, depending on the level of conduct.
- Contact BPA Cultural Resources (CR) staff immediately. Beginning with office phone numbers, continue calling down the list until you speak with someone. If no one from the CR staff is available to take your call and it is during regular business hours, contact Leasia Day at 503-230-5159 or Michelle Bennett at 503-230-3900. Should no one be available, please call CR staff on their work cell phones.

Name	Office #	Cell #	Email Address	Mailing Address
Liz Oliver	503-230-7554	503-957-3997	eaoliver@bpa.gov	Bonneville Power Administration 905 NE 11 th Ave.
Sunshine Clark Schmidt	503-230-5015	503-250-1815	srclark@bpa.gov	
Kevin Cannell	503-230-4454	503-459-7686	kgcannell@bpa.gov	

- Contact your direct supervisor & the project manager.
- Immediately complete the *Cultural Resource Discovery Report form* (attached) and send/e-mail to ALL of the BPA CR staff listed above.
- Do not draw attention to the area with any obvious flagging or markers.** Maintain confidentiality concerning the discovery of the cultural resource, and do not discuss with anyone other than the contact people listed above as required by the BPA Cultural Resource Discovery Report *Statement of Confidentiality*.
- Only* after following the checklist, completing the Cultural Resource Discovery Report form and obtaining approval from your supervisor, should work continue on your work task or project.
- If you are a supervisor, you should obtain guidance from BPA's Cultural Resources staff (listed above). This protects the artifacts and sites, and limits BPA's liability and your personal liability.

Initials of CR Staff and Date Received: _____
(Updated April 2008)

Bonneville Power Administration
Cultural Resources Discovery Report

Confidential

Name of BPA Archaeologist contacted: _____ **Date:** _____

Name of person filling out this form: _____ **Date:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email Address:** _____

Project Name: _____ **Project Description:** _____

Who discovered the materials?

Name: _____ **Phone # (req.):** _____

Direct Supervisor: _____ **Phone # (req.):** _____

Project Manager: _____ **Phone # (req.):** _____

Property Owner of Discovery Site:

Federal Agency: _____

State of: _____ **State Agency:** _____

City: _____

County: _____

Private Landowner: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Address: _____

Street _____ **City** _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

BPA Region: _____ **District:** _____

If on a BPA ROW, Name Transmission Line: _____ **Closest Tower #:** _____

Nearest Major Cross Roads/Intersection: _____

State of: _____ **County of:** _____ **Nearest Town:** _____

Location:

Township: _____ **Range:** _____ **Section:** _____ **¼ Section:** NW NE SW SE

Describe access to site: _____

Describe the event(s) that resulted in the discovery: _____

Describe what, to the best of your knowledge, was discovered: _____

Have you removed potential cultural resources during or after discovery? Yes No

If so, describe the item(s) and indicate how they were removed or disturbed, and where they are now:

Statement of Confidentiality

When dealing with or working around culturally sensitive sites, be aware that their significance and importance is unparalleled in Western society and that they hold great spiritual meaning for Native Americans. Also, federal law protects cultural resources whether it is Native American cultural objects, historic era artifacts or human skeletal remains. Therefore it is imperative that the location of any sites be privileged information and closely held. Do not share information with anyone who might pass on knowledge of this site to thieves/collectors. These measures are not only for the sanctity of the site and Native Americans, but for BPA's and your own legal liability as well.

**Please send completed form to one of BPA's archeologists at:
Bonneville Power Administration, KEC-4 Cultural Resources, 905 NE 11th Ave. Portland, OR 97232**

Initials of CR Staff and Date Received: _____
(Updated April 2008)