

memorandum

DATE: May 30, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

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

Proposed Action: Tunk Mountain Radio Station Upgrade

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

B1.19– Siting/construction/operation of microwave/radio communication towers

Location: Synarep, Okanogan County, WA
Township 35N, Range 29E, and Section 8

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA plans to upgrade its Tunk Mountain Radio Station in the Tonasket Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. BPA is coordinating with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to ensure the existing land use permit is modified to adequately address the proposed action. The proposed radio station upgrade would replace the existing communication building, electrical service, and propane tank with a new building and propane tank in adjacent locations on the same site. Proposed project details include the following:

- The new building would be 480 square feet and constructed of wood, concrete, and metal. It would be about three times larger than the old building (168 square feet).
- The new propane tank would hold 1,000 gallons.
- A waveguide bridge would be installed to connect the tower to the building.
- New electrical service would require conduit trenching to 48 inches for a distance of about 70 feet.

Construction would be done on site, and the old building and tank would be removed once the new structures are fully functional. Construction would take place from approximately July–October, 2012. Because the surface at the site is primarily exposed rock, there would be little soil movement. The new building would be anchored with rock anchors and have a concrete footer, while the waveguide bridge would require a support post anchored to the ground. Methods used for anchoring would include rock drilling and grouting in anchors and rebar. Underground electrical service would require the use of a hydraulic hammer and rock cutting tools for creating the trench, which would be sealed over with concrete. There would typically be only two to three workers on site, although there could be as many as six to eight workers at certain times. Workers will stay in the closest town with a motel, commuting to the site daily. Construction vehicles needed on site include a concrete truck, flat bed truck to deliver building materials, propane truck to deliver propane, and passenger vehicles. The existing access roads have been deemed sufficient to accommodate these vehicles without extensive improvements other than possible grading and graveling. No helicopters would be used.

Analysis: The Tonasket Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest prepared an Appendix I: “Pre-Project Documentation of Consistency” with the Programmatic Biological Assessment for Selected Forest Management Activities on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest”. The assessment concluded that the project could affect but would not likely adversely affect Canada lynx and grizzly bear (both listed as federally threatened under the Endangered Species Act), but **no effect** on any other federally listed or proposed species, designated critical habitat, or essential fish habitat. Pursuant to requirements under the federal Endangered Species Act with this finding, the USFS initiated informal consultation with the USFWS on March 23, 2012. The USFWS concurred with the findings in a letter to the USFS on March 27, 2012. BPA concurs with these determinations.

On November 10, 2011, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and on January 26, 2012, with the State of Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). BPA in cooperation with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest did a cultural resource review of the site, as documented in a USFS Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Appendix A, NHPA Section 106 Compliance Documentation received by BPA on April 11, 2012. The review found that the project would have **no effect** on cultural resources or historic properties as protected under the National Historic Preservation Act. BPA sent letters notifying DAHP and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation of this determination on April 24, 2012. A concurrence letter dated April 26, 2012 was received from DAHP, and no response was received from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

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: May 30, 2012

Attachments:
Provisions
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Provisions

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

Forest Service Permit Requirements:

1. BPA shall comply with all obligations and requirements set forth in the existing USFS land use permit, the Forest Service's Decision Memorandum, and all other associated documentation pertaining to this project.
2. The contractor and crew will be required to 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 Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District.
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, except as 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 Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District.
9. Use only certified weed free gravel. Gravel must be approved by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District.
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 a high elevation native seed mix provided by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District (contact Phil Christy or Larry Loftis [USFS Botanist] at 509-386-2186).

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 (Kevin George, 503-230-4786), other appropriate BPA project staff, and the contact person for the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District.
- 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, appropriate BPA project staff, and the archaeologist for the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District. A BPA archaeologist, interested Tribes, and the appropriate county, state, 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. Collect, remove, and legally dispose of construction waste off-site.

18. In the event of a reportable spill or release to the environment, immediately notify the KEP environmental lead (Kevin George, 503-230-4786) and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, including the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District.

19. 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.

***Special-Status Species List:**

(not documented but with the potential to occur in the project area):

Wildlife

American marten (*Martes Americana*)
American Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*)
Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Barred owl (*Strix varia varai*)
Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*)
Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*)
Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*)
Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)
California wolverine (*Gulo gulo luteus*)
Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)
Pacific fisher (*Martes pennanti pacifica*)

Western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*)
Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)
Three-Toed Woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*)
Black-Backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)
Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*)
Hairy Woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*)
Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)
Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)
Williamson's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*)
Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*)
Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*)
Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Vegetation

Northern bent grass (*Agrostis borealis*)
Tall agoseris (*Agoseris elata*)
Least bladderly milk vetch (*Astragalus microcystis*)
Skinny moonwort (*Botrychium lineare*)
Canadian single spike sedge (*Carex scirpoidea* var. *scirpoidea*)
Steller's rockbrake (*Cryptogramma stelleri*)
Golden draba (*Draba aurea*)
Lance leaved draba (*Draba cana*)
Yellow mountain aven's (*Dryas drummondii*)
Salish fleabane (*Erigeron salishii*)

Pale alpine forget me not (*Eritrichium nanum* var. *elongatum*)
Alpine azalea (*Loiseleuria procumbens*)
Slender crazyweed (*Oxytropis campestris* var. *gracilis*)
Sierra cliff brake (*Pellaea brachyptera*)
Snow cinquefoil (*Potentilla nivea*)
Idaho goose berry (*Ribes oxycanthoides* ssp. *irriguum*)
Diverse leaved cinquefoil (*Potentilla diversifolia* var. *perdissecta*)
Rock willow (*Salix vestita* var. *erecta*)

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Tunk Mountain Radio Station Upgrade

Work Order #: 255068

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):

Signed: /s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer

Date: May 30, 2012