

memorandum

DATE: April 18, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT:
Environmental Clearance Memorandum

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

Proposed Action: Merritt Radio Station Upgrade

Categorical Exclusions Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Location: Winton, Chelan County, WA
Township 26N, Range 16E, and Section 2

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA plans to upgrade its Merritt Radio Station in the Wenatchee River Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (USFS). 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. Existing structures would be removed. Proposed project details include the following:

- The new building would be 423 square feet and constructed of wood, concrete, and metal. It would be about three times larger than the old building, and built in the same location.
- The new propane tank would impact 92 square feet and hold 1,500 gallons, with a blast wall (10 square feet) installed between the new propane tank and other structures.
- The transformer box would be moved about 15 feet northwest of its current location and impact about 14 square feet.
- A temporary 6-foot × 8-foot building (48 square feet) would be installed to house equipment while the old building is removed and the new building is constructed.
- About 1.1 miles of the existing access road would be regraded and graveled.

The old building and tank would be removed once the new structures are fully functional. Construction would take place from May–August 2013. A minimal amount of soil excavation would be needed for the building foundation, while posts would be set in the ground to support the bridge. The permanently disturbed area would be about 539 square feet. Construction would involve the use of some basic mechanized equipment and hand tools. Vehicles needed on site include a concrete truck, a flat bed truck, a propane truck, an excavator, and passenger vehicles.

Analysis: As part of the USFS project review, a biological assessment (BA) was completed to consider impacts to federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The BA determined that the project may affect but would not likely adversely affect Canada lynx, gray wolf, grizzly bear, and northern spotted owl. The project was found to have no effect on other federally listed species. BPA concurs with the USFS determination. The BA was submitted to the USFWS on February 12, 2013, and any mitigation measures for minimizing impacts required as a result of informal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service would be followed.

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 in the attachment, and contingent upon the USFS receiving concurrence with the determination of effects from the USFWS, the 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/ Stacy Mason
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 19, 2013

Attachment:
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

PROVISIONS

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

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. Provide a schedule of construction activities to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District (USFS) (see below for contact information).*
4. Get approval from the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest before starting any road maintenance activities and travel. This approval will be based on road firmness and moisture levels to ensure that damage does not occur to resources or the road template.
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.

Visual:

6. Use the colors for the new communication building as approved by the USFS: “mountain brown” for the building, and “cool dark bronze” for the roof.

Habitat and Special-Status Species:

7. Apply mitigation measures recommended during informal consultation with USFWS to minimize potential impacts to Canada lynx, gray wolf, grizzly bear, and northern spotted owl.
8. Restrict construction activities to the area needed to work effectively, and where possible, limit construction equipment to existing construction areas.
9. Clean all construction equipment to ensure that it is free of noxious weed species prior to moving equipment on-site.
10. Use only certified weed free erosion and sediment control materials. Materials must be approved by the USFS.
11. Use certified weed free gravel approved by the USFS from either Two Rivers Sand and Gravel in Leavenworth, WA, or Bluwett Rock and Gravel in East Wenatchee, WA.
12. 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.
13. In the event any federally listed species or USFS sensitive species—including Canada lynx, grizzly bear, gray wolf, and northern spotted owl—are encountered during project

activities, stop work in the immediate vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead and the USFS.

Cultural Resources:

14. 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, BPA cultural resource specialist, the USFS, concerned tribes, and appropriate county, state, and federal agencies.
 - 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:

15. Manage all pH-modifying sources, fresh concrete, concrete washout areas, and concrete grinding and demolition to reduce exposure to stormwater runoff.
16. Incorporate erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) for any access road improvements and on-site ground disturbance.
17. Remove any excess soil resulting from excavation and legally dispose of it off-site at the disposal area recommended by the USFS (Sooper Pit).
18. Collect, remove, and legally dispose of construction waste off-site.
19. In the event of a reportable spill or release of hazardous materials, immediately notify the KEP environmental lead and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, including the USFS.
20. Maintain appropriate emergency spill response materials clearly marked and accessible on site to control unexpected releases of hazardous materials. 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.

****Contacts:***

KEP Environmental Lead

John Howington, 503-230-7603

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District (USFS)

Amelia Anthony, 509-548-2573

KEC Cultural Resource Lead

Nicole Brannan, 503-230-7579

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Merritt Radio Station Upgrade

Work Order #: 255074

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.

Environmental Resources	No Potential for Significance	No Potential, with Conditions (describe)
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Appendix A, NHPA Section 106 Compliance Document: Determination of no effect on cultural resources or historic properties (USFS 2012). Concurrence from WA Department of Historic Preservation on June 28, 2012.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest BA: May Affect but not Likely to Adversely Effect Canada lynx, gray wolf, grizzly bear, and northern spotted owl (USFS 2013). Concurrence letters sent to USFWS on 2/12/13.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands None present in the Project Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety Workers would follow BPA standards for Health and Safety during construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands None present in the Project Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water None present in the Project Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List any additional supporting documentation in project file.

USFS. 2012. APPENDIX A: NHPA Section 106 Compliance Documentation - Literature Review or Previous Survey to Current Standard Undertaking Only (No Field Inventory).

USFS. 2013. Biological Assessment for BPA Communications Upgrade at Merritt Communication Site Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.

Signed: /s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer

Date: April 18, 2013