

memorandum

DATE: March 20, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEPR-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Chad Hamel
Civil Engineer – TEP-TPP-1

Proposed Action: Buckley-Marion Overhead Groundwire Replacement Project

PP&A Project No.: 2,602

Categorical Exclusions Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3, Routine maintenance

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Location: Clackamas and Marion counties, Oregon.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to replace approximately 25 miles of damaged overhead ground wire on the 500-kV double circuit steel lattice Buckley-Marion #1/Ashe-Marion #2 transmission line from Structure 65/1 to Structure 89/3. Work must be performed when both circuits of the transmission line are de-energized, and due to the limited number of outages that can be scheduled, the work would be performed on 18 segments of overhead ground wire, over the course of, up to, three years, starting in the summer of 2013. Only existing access roads would be used to access the project area; however, minor road improvements may be needed at discrete locations. Brush clearing may be necessary to establish pulling/tensioning sites depending on conditions at the time of construction. Land uses along the subject corridor include rural residential, private forest land, United States Forest Service, and United States Bureau of Land Management lands.

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/ Oden Jahn

Oden Jahn

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur: /s/ Stacy Mason

Stacy Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: March 20, 2013

Attachments:

Provisions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

ATTACHMENT

PROVISIONS

The following project conditions and conservation measures would be implemented for this project:

1. Minor road improvements may not extend outside of the existing road prism and must be limited to only the minimum necessary for vehicles and equipment to access the transmission line right-of-way (ROW).
2. Erosion and sediment control devices must be installed according to manufacturer instructions or the Western Washington Stormwater Manual prior to ground disturbing activities, and in such a manner as to insure that sediment and sediment laden water do not enter waterbodies or wetlands, or violate applicable water standards.
3. No habitat removal is permitted for access road maintenance activities.
4. Access road maintenance and pulling/tensioning sites are not permitted within 65 yards of known NSO nest sites or 65 yards from edge of nest patch associated with historic or predicted NSO nest site between March 1 and September 30.
5. No ground-disturbing activities are permitted to establish pulling/tensioning sites.
6. No mature trees are to be removed outside of the previously cleared ROW or other previously cleared areas. At the pulling and tensioning sites of 73/4 and 89/3, only hand cutting or crushing with heavy equipment would be used between March 1 and September 30.
7. No Type I helicopters (Chinook, Blackhawk, or similar large helicopter) would be used.
8. No helicopters would be used within 0.25 miles of known NSO nest sites between March 1 and September 30. This includes structures 73/2, 73/3, 73/4 and 89/3.
9. Helicopter flight paths would follow the ROW within the project area, except when avoiding known NSO sites or where prohibited by FAA or other regulations.

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Buckley-Marion Overhead Groundwire Replacement Project

Work Order #: 321639

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 No ground disturbing activities are permitted to establish pulling/tensioning sites or outside of the existing road prism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) It was determined that this project would have “No Effect” on known populations of ESA-listed species and critical habitat, under the jurisdiction of USFWS and NOAA, occurring in Clackamas and Marion Counties, excluding northern spotted owl, because these species do not occur near proposed project work areas. In a letter to BPA, dated March 4 th , 2013, USFWS agreed that the proposed maintenance activities, combined with the project conditions and conservation measures, would be consistent with the activities described in the USFWS letter of concurrence (LOC) to the Salem District Bureau of Land Management regarding <i>Informal consultation on FY 2010-2013 projects within the Willamette Planning Province which may affect northern spotted owls due to disturbance</i> [FWS reference 13420-2009-I-0127], thus “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” northern spotted owls. BPA will verify that project activities remain consistent with activities described in the subsequent and forthcoming LOC for this area, when it becomes available. Through the use of the project conditions and conservation measures, the proposed BPA project would have “No Effect” on northern spotted owl critical habitat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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):

Informal consultation on FY 2010-2013 projects within the Willamette Planning Province which may affect northern spotted owls due to disturbance [FWS reference 13420-2009-I-0127]

Signed /s/ Oden W. Jahn

Date March 12, 2013

Oden W. Jahn, KEPR-4