

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: June 6, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: P. Hastings
Project Manager – TERM-TPP-4

Proposed Action: Rattlesnake-Garrison Right-of-Way Marking Project

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

Location: Missoula County, Montana

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to survey and mark the Rattlesnake-Garrison transmission line right-of-way (ROW) boundary in Missoula County, Montana. The installation of signs to mark BPA's ROW would prevent encroachment from homeowners and developers, ensure the safety of nearby residents, and allow for the continued safe maintenance and operation of BPA's transmission lines.

The proposed Project would start approximately 1 mile east of Missoula, Montana and travel in a general southeasterly direction for approximately 16 miles before terminating approximately 0.5 mile east of Clinton, Montana. Signs would be installed over approximately 10.5 miles of this length. Nearly the entire Project would generally run parallel to Interstate 90 (I-90).

The proposed Project would install approximately 221 signs along an approximately 10.5-mile-long portion of the Rattlesnake-Garrison transmission line ROW. Signs would be installed along the southern ROW boundary in two locations for approximately 1.5 miles and then along the north and south ROW boundary for approximately 9 miles. While the existing ROW crosses Lolo National Forest, no signs would be installed within the boundaries of the National Forest. In general, signs would be installed every 200 to 500 feet (average of approximately 400 feet). Prior to sign installation, survey crews would locate the centerline and the ROW limits. Temporary markers would be placed to indicate sign locations.

The permanent signs would be made of durable plastic, with approximate dimensions of 10 by 13 inches, and would be attached to 3- to 4-inch-wide galvanized steel posts. The posts would be driven approximately 2 feet into the ground by hand using a pole pounder, and would stand 4 feet 8 inches high. The proposed Project would permanently disturb an area approximately 3 to 4 inches wide by 2 feet deep for each sign. Temporary minor vegetation disturbance within the ROW near each proposed sign location may occur as necessary to provide clear sight lines for survey reconnaissance and sign installation. No access road improvements are proposed.

Findings:

There are multiple perennial and intermittent waterbodies, including the Clark Fork, and wetland complexes throughout the Project area. The Project lies within and along the ridges adjacent to the Clark Fork floodplain with elevations ranging between 3,200 feet and 4,000 feet. All signs would be installed at least 25 feet from any waterbody. Therefore, any minor erosion from ground disturbance (less than 3 inches) would not enter adjacent waterbodies. Further, there would be no effect on wetlands within the ROW.

The ROW is currently managed for low-growing vegetation. If needed, vegetation disturbance within the ROW near each sign could include trimming of shrubs and removal of some branches, which is consistent with BPA's existing ROW vegetation management practices.

The following federally-listed threatened or endangered species are listed as potentially occurring in Missoula County: Bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), Canada lynx (*Lynx Canadensis*), Water Howellia (*Howellia aquatilis*), and Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*). The proposed Project would have no effect on these species or their critical habitat because suitable habitat does not exist within the Project area or Project activities would not disturb individuals that may be present.

On May 7, 2013, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The Montana SHPO concurred with BPA's Area of Potential Effect (APE) and no effect determination in their letter dated May 16, 2013. No response from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes was received during the consultation period.

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/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *June 7, 2013*

Attachment:
Categorical Exclusion Checklist

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Rattlesnake-Garrison ROW Marking

Work Order #: 00333378

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>In the event any archaeological or historical material is encountered during Project activities, the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop work in the vicinity and notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA Project staff, interested Tribes, Montana SHPO, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies as soon as possible. • 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, including restricting access. 		
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No vegetation clearing or sign installation within 25 feet of any waterbody.</p>		
4. Areas of special designation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>No signs installed within the boundaries of Lolo National Forest.</p>		
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):
 Effects Determination for Threatened and Endangered Species
 Section 106 consultation letters

Signed: /s/ Katey Grange

Date: June 7, 2013