

memorandum

DATE: May 31, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dave Tripp
Project Manager – TEP-CSB-1

Proposed Action: Rocky Ridge Radio Station Upgrade

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

Location: Powell County, Montana

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action:

BPA proposes to upgrade its Rocky Ridge Radio Station located about 6 miles east of Garrison, Montana. The upgrade would involve replacing the existing analog communication system with a new digital communication system to ensure communication reliability. The site is located on Montana Department of Natural Resource Conservation land. Construction would be staged over the summers of 2013 and 2014.

The existing facility includes two self-supporting lattice-steel radio towers (20-foot tall and 75-foot tall), a fiberglass communication building (10 foot x 30 foot), and a propane tank. These facilities would be replaced with a 125-foot tall self-supporting radio tower built on a 35 foot x 35 foot concrete pad, a new control building (approximately 18 foot x 36 foot, with a 10 foot x 6 foot vestibule), and a new propane tank meeting current safety standards. The old towers, building and tank would be removed once the new facilities are operational.

All work would take place adjacent to the existing facilities on the 0.23 acre site. Project activities would include possible blasting and/or the use of a hydraulic hammer and rock cutting tools due to the rocky ground. No more than 4700 cubic feet of spoils from excavation of the tower and building foundation would be disposed of off-site. Tree removal would not be necessary, as the site is mostly rock outcroppings with isolated small trees and grasses. The site is accessible via existing, maintained roads.

Findings:

Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR 800, BPA determined that the proposed action is a federal undertaking that has the potential to cause effects on historic properties and initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and potentially interested tribes in February 2012 (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Nez Perce and Coeur d'Alene). On May 23, 2013, the Montana SHPO

concluded that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted based on a review of their cultural resource files. They determined that no further surveys were needed due to the previous disturbance of the site and the results of a cultural survey that had been completed for that area. No response was received from any of the consulted tribes.

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.

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/ Carolyn Sharp
Carolyn A. Sharp
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: May 31, 2013

Attachment: *Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions*

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Rocky Ridge Communication Upgrades

Work Order #: 316701

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 MT SHPO determined low likelihood of impact and no survey needed May 23, 2012	<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) MT DNRC will prepare a CX in accordance with the state Montana Environmental Policy Act for issuance of site license as the site is already developed for the same use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed: /s/ Carolyn Sharp

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