

memorandum

DATE: January 17, 2014

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Glenn Van Bergen
Project Manager - TEP-TPP-3

Proposed Action: Franklin to Hatwai Fiber Project

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Location: Franklin, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Garfield Counties, WA; and Nez Perce County, ID

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to install two sections of new fiber optic line on 76 miles of existing BPA transmission line structures in Franklin, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Garfield counties in Washington, and in Nez Perce County in Idaho (see map). The fiber would be strung on seven transmission lines and run through five substations. Section 1 would extend from Franklin Substation in Franklin County, WA to Lower Monumental Substation in Walla Walla County, WA. Section 2 would extend from Lower Granite Substation in Garfield County, WA, to Hatwai Substation in Nez Perce County, ID. The transmission lines for Section 1, which extends for 43 miles, includes Ice Harbor-Franklin No. 3, Sacajawea Tap to Ice Harbor-Franklin No. 2, Sacajawea-Sun Harbor No. 1, Sacajawea Tap to Lower Monumental-McNary No. 1, and Lower Monumental-McNary No. 1 transmission lines. The substations along Section 1 include the Franklin, Levey, Sacajawea, and Lower Monumental substations. Section 2, which extends for 33 miles, includes the Lower Granite-Hatwai No. 1 transmission line and Lower Granite and Hatwai substations.

The existing transmission lines, on which the fiber would be installed, run parallel to the Snake River. The lines are between 0 to 5 miles from the river and cross it twice—once between Levey and Sacajawea substations and once near Lower Granite Substation. The project crosses through the Steppe Zone Complex vegetation zone, which is a grass-dominated habitat. However, much of the project area is disturbed with non-native invasive plants such as yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), and puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*). The dominant land use in the project area includes rangeland and field crops. The project crosses private property, US Army Corps of Engineers property, US Bureau of Reclamation property, Washington Department of Natural Resources property, and the Nez Perce Indian Reservation.

Proposed fiber installation activities would include:

- installation of approximately 76 miles of overhead fiber optic cable all within existing BPA right-of-way and mostly on existing transmission line structures with some new wood pole structures (*see next bullet*)
- installation of 34 new fiber optic wood poles, each with two to four guy wires
- installation of 31 underground fiber vaults
- installation of a total of 7,307 feet of underground fiber optic cable at Sacajawea, Lower Monumental, Lower Granite, and Hatwai substations.
- temporary placement of 31 reel-puller sites
- construction of four new 14-foot-wide dirt access road spurs in the transmission line right-of-way off of existing access roads on the Lower Granite-Hatwai No. 1 near structures 1/1, 1/2, 6/2, and 35/1 (equal to 0.6 acre).

Project work would occur along Section 1 from approximately February to April of 2014, and along Section 2 from approximately September to October of 2014. Construction vehicles and equipment would include a helicopter to string the fiber, a boom truck and a bucket truck for installing the fiber optic wood poles, a one-ton line truck and trailer with the reel-puller, a small backhoe, cable plow, and/or bulldozer or trencher for soil excavation and burying underground fiber, and vehicles for transportation.

Permanent impacts from the placement of vaults and fiber optic wood poles would total about 0.01 acre. Temporary impacts due to ground disturbance from construction vehicles and soil excavation along the length of the whole line would total about 66 acres. Disturbed ground would be restored by preserving the topsoil and/or reseeded. Other temporary impacts would be from vehicle noise—including a helicopter—while other permanent impacts would be from the installation of the overhead fiber.

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.

/s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer
Kara Hempy-Mayer
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 17, 2014

Attachment(s):
Provisions
Project Vicinity Map
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

ATTACHMENT

PROVISIONS

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

Land Use

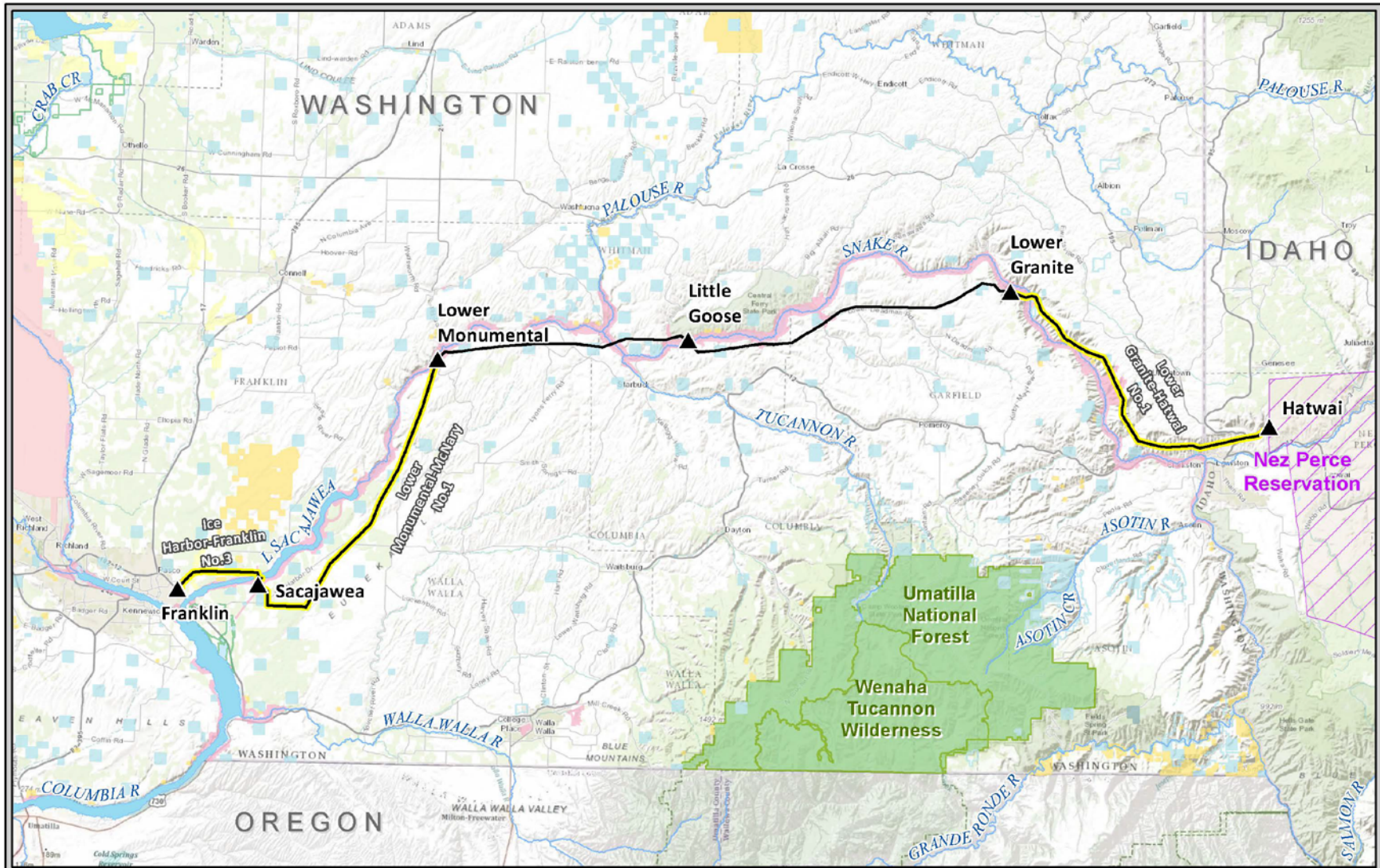
1. For ground disturbing activities in BPA's easement on USACE property, comply with all obligations and requirements set forth in the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) land use permit, the USACE Decision Memorandum, and all other associated documentation pertaining to this project and BPA easements.
2. Provide a schedule of construction activities to all landowners/agencies along the corridor that could be affected by construction.
3. For restoration of disturbed ground on USACE property, use a seed mix or restoration method approved by USACE, Walla Walla District.
4. Use only certified weed free erosion and sediment control materials and gravel on USACE property: materials must be approved by USACE, Walla Walla District.

Special-Status Species

5. Coordinate with the BPA environmental lead for a preconstruction survey of potential Washington ground squirrel burrows at the Lower Monumental-McNary No. 1 line. Ensure vehicles stay within the designated travel route established during the survey in order to avoid impacts to potential burrows. In this area, restrict vehicles to ATVs. Remove markers designating the travel route following installation activities. In other areas, ensure vehicles stay on existing access roads.

Cultural Resources

6. In the event any archaeological or historic materials are encountered during project activities, take the following actions:
 - o Stop work in the immediate vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead and cultural resource specialist. Interested tribes and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies should also be notified. On USACE property, also contact USACE, Walla Walla District.
 - o Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
 - o Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site and restrict access to the site of discovery



- Public Lands Ownership**
- US Bureau of Land Management
 - US Bureau of Reclamation
 - US Dept. of Defense
 - US Dept. of Energy
 - US Forest Service
 - Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources
 - Washington State Parks and Recreation
- Legend:**
- BPA Substations
 - BPA Transmission Lines
 - Proposed Fiber Route Along Existing Transmission Line

Franklin to Hatwai Fiber Project Vicinity Map

Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia and Garfield Counties, WA;
and Nez Perce County, ID



11/7/2013



Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Franklin to Hatwai Fiber Project

Work Order #: 308356 and 308358

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 effect determination based on review, survey, and consultation with WA Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), ID State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the following tribes: the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho. BPA received concurrence from WA DAHP on 8/20/13, and from ID SHPO on 8/23/13. A change to three impact areas in Washington resulted in a second consultation with WA DAHP and tribes on 12/13/13. BPA received a second concurrence from WA DAHP on 12/30/13.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) <i>Silene spaldingii</i> (Spalding's catchfly), federally listed as a threatened species, and <i>Spermophilus washingtoni</i> (Washington ground squirrel), a federal candidate for listing, have potential habitat present in the project area. Surveys were completed in 2013: no individuals were found; potential burrows of Washington ground squirrel were found in one area. Mitigation measures will avoid potential impacts. No effect determination based on review, survey, and mitigation measures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands No work is being done in floodplains or wetlands based on available resources and site visits.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<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 Farmland of statewide importance and prime farmland if irrigated occur in the affected area, particularly in Franklin and Walla Walla counties in Washington. However, negligible amounts of farmland would be affected in any one area by fiber optic wood poles and/or vaults.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water The Snake River is present in the project area. However, there would be no in-water work and no riparian tree removal; therefore, the Snake River would not be affected. No other special sources of water have been identified in the project area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting Documentation:

- FranklinToHatwai_ESA_NoEffectMemo_2013
- Memorandum: Franklin to Hatwai Fiber Optic Project Washington Ground Squirrel Survey 2013
- Memorandum: Franklin to Hatwai Fiber Optic Project *Silene Spaldingii* Survey 2013
- Cultural Resource Survey for the Franklin to Hatwai Fiber Optic Project, Franklin, Walla Walla, Garfield, and Whitman Counties, Washington and Nez Perce County, Idaho 2013

Signed: /s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer

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