

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration

**Casper-Seminole (Retired) 69-kV Transmission Line Emergency Conductor Removal
Carbon and Natrona Counties, Wyoming**

- A. Brief Description of Proposal:** Western Area Power Administration (Western), Casper Field Office, proposes to remove the conductor along its Casper-Seminole (Retired) 69-kV Transmission Line. The transmission line has been out of service for a number of years. A recent survey of the line found the cable conductor lines are in a condition of imminent failure. A potential failure of the conductor may pose a hazard to vehicular traffic on public roads, or the conductors may become energized by adjacent active transmission lines. This may pose an electrocution or shock hazard to the general public or wildlife on public and private lands. Western would prevent this imminent threat to public safety by removing the metal conductors. Western will accomplish all work using the existing right-of-way (ROW) and access routes along the approximately 23.1-mile section of transmission line. The existing access road would be used to remove the conductors and no road maintenance is involved in this project. Conductor pulling locations will be on existing access road sites or along the existing ROW. The project transmission line is located between Township 30 North, Range 82 West, Section 30; and Township 26 North, Range 84 West, Section 11 of the 6th Principle Meridian Southwest of Casper, Wyoming, in Carbon and Natrona Counties. Equipment used would be rubber-tired vehicles such as cable spool truck and bucket truck.
- B. Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied:** (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

A Memorandum from the EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT-COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, dated May 12, 2010, SUBJECT: Emergencies and the National Environmental Policy Act – (See Attachment 1, part 2. B). States: “If the Federal agency proposed emergency response activity is not statutorily exempt from NEPA and the agency has a categorical exclusion (CE) that includes that type of activity, then apply the CE, unless there are extraordinary circumstances that indicate using the CE in this particular case is not appropriate. Agency NEPA personnel should be contacted regarding agency-specific definitions of actions that are “categorically excluded.”

B4.10 Removal of Electric Transmission Facilities.

Deactivation, **dismantling**, and removal of **electric transmission facilities** (including, but not limited to, **electric powerlines**, substations, and switching stations), and abandonment and restoration of rights-of-way (including, but not limited to, associated access roads).

- C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):** (See full text in regulation and attached checklist.)

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D.

For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements. To fit within a class, the proposal must not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders;

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- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;
 - Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases;
 - Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, State, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to, those listed in paragraph B. (4) (see Attachment A).
- 2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.
- 3) The proposal is not “connected” to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:

If the scope of work of this project changes, Western’s Environmental Division must be contacted for additional environmental review.

This Categorical Exclusion is valid for the 2014 field season after the signature date. If construction has not commenced within that time, Western’s Environmental Division must be contacted for an updated environmental review prior to construction.

Western’s Casper Field Office will coordinate with Western’s Environmental Division to have cultural resource monitors on site. Western’s Environmental Division will supply environmentally sensitive area avoidance maps to the Casper Field Office for areas that must be avoided and/or monitored during the project.

This Categorical Exclusion does not authorize any access road maintenance work or pulling site development.

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, Western’s Regional Preservation Officer shall be contacted, and the material evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

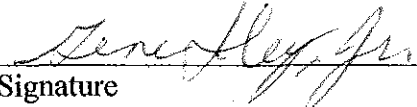
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All equipment used must be cleaned prior to use in to prevent transporting of invasive plant or noxious weed seeds.

Western shall exercise care to preserve the natural landscape and shall conduct this construction operation to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the natural surroundings in the project vicinity. Except where clearing is required for permanent works, approved construction roads, or excavation operations, vegetation shall be preserved and shall be protected from damage by Western's construction operations and equipment.

- E. **Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.



Signature

Date: 8/7/14

Gene Iley, Jr.
NEPA Compliance Officer
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region
Western Area Power Administration

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statue, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:			
(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(ii) Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally-proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii) Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv) Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v) Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor;	X		
(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests; or	X		

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<p>(5) 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, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.</p>	<p>X</p>		
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