

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Mt. Zion/Biddle Butte Wireless Communication Upgrades

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian TEP-TPP-3

Location: Township 1 North, Range 5 East, Section 9 in Skamania County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: T-Mobile has requested that BPA allow installation of a short run of fiber optic cable from an existing power pole to the T-Mobile Mt. Zion Communication Site located within BPA's Biddle Butte communication compound. The fiber optic cable would allow T-Mobile to upgrade its wireless communication facility with the latest technologies. The 2-inch conduit would run from a power pole located about 5 feet from the fenced communication compound. A new 24 inch by 36 inch intercept vault would be placed near the base of the utility pole. From there, fiber optic cable would be placed in a 20 foot long trench paralleling the outside of the existing fence before turning in to the fenced compound and connecting with T-Mobile's equipment. The trench would be about 18 inches wide by a minimum of 30 inches deep and would be returned to existing conditions or better after conduit placement. All work would occur within the previously disturbed and rocked communication site grounds. There would be no new visual impacts to the site after installation. Construction is anticipated to take less than a week to complete and would occur during daylight hours.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) 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), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Claire McClory

Claire McClory

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Date: May 6, 2015

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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Project Site Description

BPA's Biddle Butte Communication Site is located atop Mt. Zion in the Columbia River Scenic Gorge in Skamania County, Washington. Much of the site has been degraded by numerous communication facilities. The surrounding area has been cleared for beam path easements, parking, and communication compounds. Surrounding the communication sites is a douglas-fir dominant forest.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All subsurface activities would occur within previously disturbed areas. The DAHP Statewide Predictive Model shows moderately low to low probability for cultural resources. BPA determined this project has no potential to affect historic properties.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All work in previously disturbed area; no plants present/disturbed.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All work in previously disturbed area; no habitat present.</p>		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> None present.</p>		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation:

None present

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation:

None present.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation:

The project is located in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) Forest Designation. The US Forest Service verified that the project falls within Uses Allowed Outright described in C.(2), page 11-7-18 of the CRGNSA Management Plan. Therefore, the project is exempt from further review (email communication, Robin Shoal USFS, 5/1/15).

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation:

The new fiber optic cable would not be noticeably different from the existing utility pole that supports other fiber optic cables.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation:

Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation:

Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation:

No potential for impact.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

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

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA owns the Biddle Butte Communication Site.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on any environmentally sensitive resources.

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory
Claire McClory KEC-4

Date: May 6, 2015