

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Murray-Custer FY15 Wood Pole Replacement Project

**PP&A No.:** 3187

**Project Manager:** Cynthia Rounds

**Location:** Skagit County, WA

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Murray-Custer #1	20/2	34N	5E	29	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	20/3	34N	5E	29	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	20/4	34N	5E	20	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	20/5	34N	5E	20	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	20/7	34N	5E	20	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	21/4	34N	5E	17	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	22/6	34N	5E	8	Skagit, WA	Private
Murray-Custer #1	22/7	34N	5E	8	Skagit, WA	Private
Murray-Custer #1	23/2	34N	5E	8	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	23/4	34N	5E	5	Skagit, WA	WA DNR
Murray-Custer #1	24/6	35N	5E	32	Skagit, WA	PUD
Murray-Custer #1	24/7	35N	5E	32	Skagit, WA	Private
Murray-Custer #1	24/8	35N	5E	32	Skagit, WA	Private

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) at the locations specified in the Location Section of this document. Replacement will be in-kind and will utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger will be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement. 200 feet of new access road development is also planned to provide appropriate access to structure 23/2. Minor maintenance of other landings and roads within their existing road and landing prisms may also be required.

The proposed action will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

**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/ Chad Browning*  
Chad Browning  
Environmental Scientist

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*  
Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 1, 2015

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.

**Proposed Action:** Murray-Custer FY15 Wood Pole Replacement Project

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### Project Site Description

The project activities will be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights-of-way that cross through managed timber land. The site locations primarily consist of private and State lands (Washington Dept. of Natural Resources). The project area ranges from mostly flat to mountainous terrain. Vegetation consists of forests and grasses.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Explanation:</u> According to the scope of the proposed work, the activity is not a type that would result in changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such historic properties are located in the area of potential effects. The structure replacements will be within existing structure footprints in the cleared transmission line ROW and the access road work will be routine access road maintenance necessary to preserve existing infrastructure, maintain roadway safety, and manage stormwater run-off and will be limited to existing access road cut and prism for the most part. The one new access spur (200 feet) was surveyed for cultural resources—no resources were found. New landing pad construction is not planned or anticipated. Crews and equipment are to use new and existing access roads to and from each work site.</li> <li>▪ An inadvertent discovery form will be provided and explained to the road contractor. In the event of an inadvertent discovery, work will immediately cease and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist will be notified.</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project will require minimal ground disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands will be affected.</p>		
<b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No trees will be removed; about one acre of grasses/shrubs will be disturbed (mostly non-native or invasive species).</p>		
<b>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species. The work will also entail minimal human disturbance.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**  
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: All work will occur within existing ROW and Best Management Practices (BMP's) will be implemented throughout the project to ensure localized soil disturbance does not cause sedimentation issues into any waterway. No in-water work is proposed for this project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: None present in project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed work is in an upland area; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 10 feet below ground surface.

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



Explanation: No change in land use and no specially designated areas identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: New wood poles will be similar to existing structures would not be noticeably different than existing structures. Access road work would be consistent with existing roads.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities will not impact human health or safety.

### 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:

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#### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Notification letters will be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to all landowners prior to work.

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

Signed: /s/ Chad Browning  
Chad Browning,  
(Environmental Protection Specialist)

Date: May 1, 2015