

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Bonanza Communication Facility Expansion

Project Manager: Charlie Majors TEP-CSB-2

Location: Power County, Idaho

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to install new digital communication equipment within the Federal Aviation Authority's (FAA) Bonanza Radio Station (Bonanza) in Power County, Idaho. BPA is in the process of installing a digital communication system in Southeastern Idaho to provide critical power system monitoring and line crew communications functions in the region. The installation of new equipment would unite two separate sections of the radio communication network under BPA ownership and operation, remove BPA dependence on FAA radio circuits, eliminate associated leasing costs, ensure communication and power system reliability, and maintain compliance with North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) standards and Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC) requirements.

In order to complete the project, BPA would expand the Bonanza yard by approximately 0.2 acre to accommodate the installation of a new radio tower, communications building, and propane tank. BPA would pour a 35-foot by 35-foot concrete foundation in a hole excavated 36 inches below grade, and attach 160-foot tall 4-legged self-supporting steel lattice radio tower with 4 antennas to the new foundation. A single 2,000 gallon propane tank would be installed on two 3-foot by 4-foot concrete slabs excavated up to 24 inches below grade. A new one-story 18-foot by 36-foot concrete masonry unit block veneer communications building with standing seam metal roof would be constructed in a hole excavated up to 36 inches below grade. The building would contain new digital radio communication equipment and a 36-kilowatt (kW) emergency generator. A new grounding mat would be installed 18 inches below grade in the expansion area, and connected to the existing grounding mat. In order to connect the new antenna with the new digital communications equipment in the communications building, an elliptical communications cable known as a waveguide would be installed above ground along a radio tower leg and beneath a new 20 foot long protective ice bridge constructed between the radio tower and communications building. The new ice bridge would be supported on eight posts secured to 12-inch diameter, 36-inch deep concrete foundations. Eight 18-inch deep potholes would be hand-excavated to bond the new ice bridge to the grounding mat. The existing perimeter fence would be extended to enclose the expansion area, and all disturbed areas within the yard would be graded and rocked.

The proposed project would permanently disturb approximately 0.3 acre for equipment installation and yard expansion. The temporarily disturbance would be approximately 1.0 acre for equipment installation and storage as well as the movement of construction vehicles and heavy equipment.

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/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 10, 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: Bonanza Communication Facility Expansion

Project Site Description

The proposed project is in Power County, Idaho. The project area is surrounded by native vegetation, including big sagebrush, rabbit brush and bunchgrass. Lower slopes and surrounding plain are agricultural fields. The area immediately surrounding the existing communication site has been disturbed by the original construction, ongoing maintenance, and recreational use.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Idaho SHPO concurrence on no adverse effect to historic properties 5/26/2015. Shoshone-Bannock Tribe requested to be notified should cultural material/human remains be unearthed during ground disturbance.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. Less than an acre of shrubs removed or disturbed.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. Less than an acre of low quality habitat typical of the area would be disturbed.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> None present.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> None present.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: None present.

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



Explanation: About 0.2 acres of vacant land would be converted to use for the expanded communication facility.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: New communication facilities would include a 160-foot tall tower. Would be visually consistent with the adjacent communication tower.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No 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 has been working with the FAA to obtain an outgrant to construct the new facilities.

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: September 10, 2015