

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Coyote Hills Radio Station Electrical Service Replacement Project

Project Manager: Amit Sinha TEP-TPP-1

Location: Lake County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.13 Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund Surprise Valley Electric Cooperative (SVEC) to replace an existing 15.6-mile long subsurface power cable along Snyder Ranch Road to solve intermittent power problems at BPA's Coyote Hills radio communication site. Installed in 1971, the SVEC-owned cable is the only available source of power to the site and has reached the end of its useful life.

Construction work would include excavation of an 18 inch-wide by 14 inch-deep trench about 6 feet north of the existing Snyder Ranch Road prism. A new 15-kV power cable would be installed in the trench which would be stabilized with rock and backfilled with native materials. In areas with steep slopes or difficult terrain, the trench may need to be located up to 30 feet from the centerline of the existing road. However, the majority of work would occur within an existing disturbed area.

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/ Michael J. O'Connell

Michael J. O'Connell

Environmental Protection Specialist

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

The project area is located parallel to the existing Snyder Ranch Road. Much of the project work area would be within previously disturbed areas. Native shrub steppe vegetation (primarily sage brush and native grasses) dominate the area immediately adjacent. The project crosses land owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Oregon Department of State Lands (ODSL), and private property.

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> BPA received concurrence on its determination of no historic properties affected from Oregon SHPO on November 18, 2015. The Burns Paiute, Klamath, and Warm Springs were consulted concurrently with the SHPO and have not responded. The Oregon Department of State Lands (ODSL) was notified of the project, the report, and findings in the same timeframe.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would be primarily limited to areas that have been previously disturbed by road or power cable installation. Soils would be compacted after cable installation. There is minimal risk of erosion control issues.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. Some low quality grasses and sage brush would be disturbed or removed during subsurface cable installation.		
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. Some low quality grasses and sage brush would be disturbed or removed during subsurface cable installation.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explanation: None present.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: None present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: None present.

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

Explanation: Land use would remain unchanged.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: No impact, all work would be subsurface.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change. Construction would last about three weeks.

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: The BLM completed an independent NEPA review (NEPA Log # DOI-BLM-OR-L050-2014-0035CX) for sections of the project that cross their property. BPA consulted with ODSL on its undertaking. SVEC has been in contact with private land owners regarding the proposed work.

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

Signed: /s/ Michael J. O'Connell

Date: December 1, 2015