

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Dworshak Passive Repeater project

**Project Manager:** Dave Tripp – TEP-CSB-1

**Location:** Clearwater 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 proposes to replace 40 year old analog radios with newer digital radios on the Dworshak radio system to provide better communications between Army Corps facilities at the Dworshak Dam Powerhouse and BPA control centers. The project would include installation of two new digital radios at the Dworshak Dam Power House. One of the radios would use an existing beam path to the current Dworshak Passive Repeater that directs the signal to the Dworshak Substation. The second radio would use a new beam path to a new Dworshak Passive Repeater to be installed next to the current Passive Repeater. The new Passive Repeater would route the signal from Dworshak Dam Power House directly to BPA's Teakean Butte Radio Station. New radios would be also be installed at the Dworshak Substation. All work would occur within Nez Perce Reservation lands.

Work at the Dworshak Dam Powerhouse would include the installation of two new antenna mounting systems with antennas on the parapet of the roof. Two new waveguides would be routed from the antennas, through the roof to the communications room. The communications room would house new batteries and chargers, three new power conduits, and three new racks and cable ladders to support the new antennas. One rack would be emptied to make room for these upgrades and the current DC plant would be removed.

Work at the Dworshak Passive Repeater site would include chipping away loose material from the existing footings, then capping them with new concrete. A new Passive Repeater would be constructed about 20 feet east of the existing Passive Repeater. Three 2'x2' foundations would be dug and backfilled with concrete to support the new structure. The new Passive Repeater would be 14 feet tall by 16 feet wide. About 30 fir and pine trees would need to be removed to provide line of site for the new beam path to Teakean Butte and to improve line of site for the existing beam path to Dworshak Substation.

Materials and equipment would be delivered to the Passive Repeater site via helicopter. Materials would be staged directly adjacent to the existing Passive Repeater on uncultivated land. Crews would temporarily access the site by traveling with ATVs along the edge of an existing farm field. Construction is expected to take one month to complete.

**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: October 13, 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:** Dworshak Passive Repeater Project

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## Project Site Description

The work at Dworshak Dam Powerhouse and Dworshak Substations would occur in fully developed locations. The Dworshak Passive Repeater is located on a north facing slope 2 miles south of Clearwater River at 2,900 feet in elevation. The site is adjacent to an active wheat field. Some native grasses and shrubs are present, including red-twig dogwood, Idaho fescue, and yarrow.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Nez Perce THPO concurred on no effect determination 10/02/15.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance anticipated.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species are present. Less than 20 square feet of native plants and grasses would be cleared for new footings. About 30 fir and pine trees measuring 22 inches in diameter and less would be removed to provide beam path line of site. Most of the trees are downslope of the Dworshak Passive Repeater site in a densely forested area. Their removal would not have a discernable impact on plant species diversity in the immediate vicinity. Access to the Passive Repeater would be along an existing, disturbed farm field.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Removal of 30 pine and fir trees near Dworshak Passive Repeater would have temporary impacts to wildlife habitat. Because the trees removed are a small fraction of the dense forest that surrounds them, long-term impacts to wildlife would be minor. No special-status species or designated habitat present.		

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



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:

The new Passive Repeater would not be noticeable different from the existing, adjacent Passive Repeater. Tree removal would take place in an area that is not generally visible to the public.

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 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:

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

Description: The project is located entirely within the Nez Perce reservation. BPA has been coordinating with the Nez Perce and underlying landowners on its proposed undertaking.

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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/ Claire McClory  
Claire McClory KEC-4

Date: October 13, 2015