

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Pearl-Keeler Transmission Line Structure Modifications

Project Manager: A. Williams, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Washington 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: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to modify several structures along the Pearl-Keeler No. 1 line in Washington County, Oregon, including the existing structures between 14/1 and 16/1 to accommodate future municipal development while ensuring appropriate electrical clearances. Specifically, BPA proposes to move and increase the height of seven lattice steel structures (14/3 to 15/6) and reconfigure one steel suspension structure (14/2). Structures would be moved less than 75 feet from their current locations and all structures would remain within the existing right-of-way. Some structure heights may increase up to 45 feet over the current average height of 90 feet.

To facilitate the structure modifications, existing footings would be cut below ground level and soil would be recontoured over the remaining footings. The new footings would be installed at their new locations and the structures would be relocated to the new footings. Structure modification work areas would be approximately 200 feet by 200 feet. Ground disturbance in the work areas would occur from equipment staging, structure removal and footing abandonment, and structure installation. In total, approximately 41 acres of land could be temporarily disturbed. Because the relocated structures would have a similar footprint as the existing structures, there would be no net increase in permanent disturbance area.

Two existing access roads would be used as routes of travel to access the existing right-of-way during construction. Upon accessing the right-of-way, vehicles and equipment would also use the right-of-way for travel. No permanent ground disturbance is proposed for the routes of travel.

A material storage and contractor staging yard would be located within the Hillsboro, Oregon city limits. The yard would be completely paved and fenced and would not require any site preparation for project use.

The new footing installation would take about 2 to 3 days per structure and would occur in the fall of 2016. The structures would then be moved and the old footings would be abandoned over a period of 1 to 2 days in the fall of 2016. The material yard would be used throughout this time.

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/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 5, 2016

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

The potential project work area consists of six discrete work areas, totaling about 41 acres, within the existing BPA right-of-way. An additional 2 acres of existing access roads would be used as routes of travel for the project. The general surrounding land use is comprised of large-scale agriculture consisting primarily of low-growing cover crops and pasture and an overgrown tree farm that is bisected by the cleared BPA right-of-way.

Terrain in the project area is generally flat to gently rolling. The project area lies at an elevation between 160 and 210 feet above sea level. The Tualatin River is approximately 1.5 miles to the west of the project area and Butternut Creek, a tributary of the Tualatin River, flows approximately 500 feet between the work areas associated with structures 15/1 and 15/2. Wetland delineations were completed for all proposed work areas in August 2015 and February 2016. Two wetlands were identified in the right-of-way work areas and an additional wetland was identified near a route of travel.

A non-BPA waste disposal area was identified within the right-of-way approximately 100 feet from the proposed structure relocation area at 15/2. The waste disposal site contains electronics, old 55-gallon drums, and other storage containers.

A material storage and contractor staging yard in Hillsboro would be paved, fenced, and surrounded by similar industrial/commercial landuses.

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"/>

Explanation: BPA initiated Area of Potential Effect (APE) consultation with Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, and Consecrated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon on January 7, 2016, and received SHPO responses on January 19, 2016, and February 1, 2016. BPA then submitted a revised project APE via a letter dated January 27, 2016, and received a response from the SHPO on February 17, 2016.

Based on two field surveys of the project work areas, BPA determined that the proposed undertaking would not adversely affect archeological or historic resources. The SHPO concurred with this determination in their letter and email dated April 13, 2016, and April 21, 2016, respectively.

No tribal response was received.

Mitigation: In the event any archaeological or historical material is encountered during project activities, the following actions shall be taken:

- Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested tribes, Oregon SHPO, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies.

- Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.

2. **Geology and Soils**



Explanation: A majority of the project area has been previously disturbed by agriculture and transmission line construction. Ground disturbance would occur where existing structure footings are cut (about 12 square feet required to access the top of the footing attachment) and new footings are installed (about 26 square feet for entirely new footing). Minor soil disturbance (such as rutting) would occur within the right-of-way and routes of travel where vehicles travel or equipment is staged. All ground disturbance areas would be restored upon project completion.

Mitigation: Erosion control measures would be used during construction to minimize impacts. Excess material would be contoured to match surrounding terrain, track-walked, seeded, and mulched.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation: Vegetation in the area consists of low-growing plants and agricultural crops within a managed right-of-way. There are no documented occurrences of any plants listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the project would have no effect on ESA-listed plant species.

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: Project disturbance would occur in agricultural and transmission line right-of-way open habitats. Disruption of normal wildlife behavior may occur from temporary elevated noise and human presence and some limited incidental mortality of immobile or slow moving animals may occur from excavation or equipment use. Due to the agricultural nature of the general project area, most wildlife are accustomed to disturbance. There are no documented occurrences or suitable habitat for any wildlife listed under the ESA and the project would have no effect on ESA-listed wildlife species.

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



Explanation: There are no waterbodies, floodplains, or fish present within or adjacent to the project area. The closest waterbody is Butternut Creek, which would be about 500 feet at its closest location.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: All wetlands and 50-foot-wide wetland buffers would be demarcated and avoided during construction.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or groundwater uses are proposed. BPA would implement a spill prevention, control, and countermeasures (SPCC) plan to limit the potential for hazardous spills contaminating aquifers. Maximum depth of excavation would be about 9 to 10 feet below ground surface.

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



Explanation: Increased vehicular traffic associated with construction may temporarily hinder local roadway users. Land users may be temporarily disrupted during construction due to noise, presence of heavy equipment, and ground disturbance. Disruption of agricultural activities may occur.

Mitigation: Property access would be maintained during construction and landowners would be provided a

construction schedule. A traffic control plan would be developed in support of obtaining the road use permit. For agricultural lands, damaged drain tiles would be repaired and landowners would be compensated at fair market value for any crop damage.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Construction equipment may temporarily disrupt the visual quality of the project area. After construction, views of the project area would include slightly higher structures, but the general appearance of the structures would not deviate dramatically from the existing landscape.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project area is in the Portland Metropolitan Service District Boundary and the Portland-Vancouver Interstate Air Quality Maintenance Area (AQMA), which are Maintenance Areas for carbon monoxide and ozone, respectively. Dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area during construction. Any dust or emission generation would occur over a short time frame and is not predicted to meaningfully contribute to the project area becoming out of attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Mitigation: Dust abatement, particularly near residences, would be implemented when needed to limit dust levels.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise would be generated during construction and would be limited to about a maximum of 3 days for each structure. The nearest residence would be about 130 feet from the workspace. Construction noise would occur over a short time period and would occur only during daylight hours (7am to 4pm). Further, landowners would be notified of the construction schedule so as to anticipate elevated noise levels. Operational noise would not change from current conditions.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Standard construction safety measures would be implemented. An existing landowner waste disposal area would be demarcated and avoided during construction.

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: N/A

- 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: N/A

- 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: The non-BPA waste disposal area would be demarcated and construction would not disturb any material in the existing easement.

- 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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA contacted landowners to notify them of the proposed project. BPA will also notify landowners prior to construction.

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

Signed: /s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange – ECT-4

Date: May 5, 2016