

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Bonneville-Hood River Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacements

PP&A Project No.: 3339

Project Manager: Scott Williams, Line Foreman III – TFDF-The Dalles

Location: Bonneville Power Administration's The Dalles District.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership
Bonneville-Hood River No. 1	7/8	2N	08E	05	Hood River, OR	USFS /Forest
	10/7, 10/11	2N	08E	02	Hood River, OR	USFS /Private Forest
	20/2, 20/3	3N	10E	32	Hood River, OR	State/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 five deteriorating wood-pole structures (including, cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on the Bonneville-Hood River Transmission Line. 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. Cross arms, braces, or switches may be also replaced.

Minor maintenance of existing landing areas around the structures and access roads within their existing road prisms may be required to improve access to the structures. No unauthorized construction activities will occur in any water body including streams, ponds, or wetlands. Access road maintenance may include blading, shaping, rocking and construction of waterbars and drain dips.

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/ Fred Walasavage

Fred Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 4, 2016

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist

Effects Determination for T&E Species

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: Bonneville-Hood River Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacements

Project Site Description

The project activities will be conducted within BPA’s existing transmission line right-of-way and in the existing access road prism. The site locations are on private, state, and federal lands. The project area ranges from sloped to mountainous terrain. The transmission line right-of-way consists of low-growing shrubs and grasses; surrounding vegetation consists of forest tree species.

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 Oregon SHPO concurrence of “no adverse effect” determination received on February 17, 2016. Yakama, Nez Perce, and Warm springs Tribes were also consulted—no response. In the event of an inadvertent discovery, work will immediately cease and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist will be notified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Geology and Soils <u>Explanation:</u> The project will require minimal ground disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands will be affected. All disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings and 15 feet from the poles will be reseeded.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) <u>Explanation:</u> No vegetation removal is expected, however, any disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings and 15 feet from the poles will be reseeded.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-tatus species and habitats) <u>Explanation:</u> No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species. The work will also entail minimal human disturbance over a several day time period.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs) <u>Explanation:</u> None present in project area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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. Three of the wood-pole structures are located in Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) on the Mt Hood National Forest and one of the wood-pole structures is located on Seneca Fouts Memorial State Natural Area.

The wood-pole structures will be replaced in-kind in the existing pole locations and access road maintenance will be within the existing access road prism. No additional mitigation measures were identified through coordination with the land managers of these specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**

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

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or or vehicle emissions created 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.

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

- 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.

- 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.

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

The US Forest Service, State, and landowner have been notified by the BPA Realty Specialist.

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

Signed: /s/ Fred Walasavage
Fred Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: March 4, 2016