

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Knight to Wautoma Fiber Project

**Project No.:** P00155

**Project Manager:** Glenn Van Bergen – TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Benton, Klickitat, and Yakima Counties, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.7 – Fiber Optic Cable

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install a section of new fiber optic cable along 80 miles of existing BPA transmission lines in Benton, Klickitat, and Yakima counties in Washington (see attached map). The fiber would extend northeast from structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy-Spring Creek No. 1 230-kilovolt (kV) line in Klickitat County to the Wautoma Substation in Benton County, WA. One fiber optic cable would be installed on two transmission lines (Big Eddy-Spring Creek No.1 230 kV and Wautoma-Rock Creek No. 1 500-kV) and run through three substations (Spring Creek, Wine Country, and Wautoma).

Proposed fiber installation activities would include:

- Installation of approximately 80 miles of overhead fiber optic cable. Most of the fiber would be attached to existing transmission line structures; however, 18 new fiber optic wood poles, with guy wires and anchors, would be required for intermediate support between existing structures.
- Installation of about 500 feet of underground cable between structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy-Spring Creek No. 1 230-kV transmission line and structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy-Knight 500-kV transmission line.
- Installation of short sections of underground cable at Spring Creek, Wine Country, and Wautoma substations.
- Vegetation removal (tree limbing) along an existing access road at structure 31/4 on the Big Eddy-Spring Creek No. 1 230-kV transmission line.
- Permanent installation of 17 underground fiber vaults measuring 4 feet x 4 feet x 4feet adjacent to existing transmission line structures.
- Temporary placement of 17 reel-puller sites—100 feet by 300 feet.

Project-related construction activities would occur during two proposed line outages in 2016 and 2017. The first outage would extend from approximately August 3 to September 4, 2016, and the second outage would extend from January 31 to April 25, 2017. Construction activities such as equipment and materials mobilization and installation of erosion and sediment control measures may occur outside of these out dates. Construction vehicles and equipment would include a 4-wheel ATV or helicopter to string the fiber, a boom truck and a bucket truck for installing the fiber optic wood poles, a one-ton line truck and trailer with the reel-puller, a small backhoe, cable plow, and/or bulldozer or trencher for soil excavation and burying underground fiber, and ½ ton pick-up truck and other similar vehicles for work crew transportation. No road improvements are proposed.

The existing transmission lines upon which the fiber would be installed are primarily agricultural land, including rangeland and field crops. The project crosses private property, U.S. Bureau of Land Management property, and Washington Department of Natural Resources property. While the project does not cross the Yakama Reservation, it does cross lands owned by the Yakama tribe outside the reservation.

**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/ Justin T. Moffett

Justin T. Moffett

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 1, 2016

Attachments:

Environmental Checklist

Project Area Map

# 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:** Knight to Wautoma Fiber Project

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## Project Site Description

The new fiber optic line would be located along approximately 80 miles of existing transmission lines in Benton, Klickitat, and Yakima counties in Washington. The fiber would extend northeast from structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy Knight 500-kV line to structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy-Spring Creek No. 1 230- kV line then transfer to structure 57/5 of Wautoma-Rock Creek No. 1 500 kV and continue on to the Wautoma Substation. The fiber optic cable would run through three BPA substations (Spring Creek, Wine Country, and Wautoma). The dominant land use in the project area is agriculture, which includes rangeland and field crops. The project crosses private property, U.S. Bureau of Land Management property, and Washington Department of Natural Resources property. While the project does not cross the Yakama Reservation, it does cross lands owned by the Yakama tribe outside the reservation.

## 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurrence on a conditional no adverse effect determination received January 28, 2016. BPA also consulted with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation who requested BPA employ a tribal monitor who would observe construction activities along certain portions of the fiber alignment. The conditional no adverse effect is based on having Yakama Nation monitors present during work in certain portions of the APE.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Employ a tribal monitor during construction activities.</li><li>✓ In the event any archaeological or historic materials are encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead (Laura Roberts 503-230-5073) and the BPA archaeologist (Kurt Perkins 503-230-4271). Appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, DAHP, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies should also be notified.</li><li>• Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.</li><li>• Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</li></ul></li></ul>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explanation: Soil disturbance, totaling less than one acre, would occur:

- During installation of 18 new fiber optic wood poles, guy wires and anchors along the existing transmission lines.
- During installation of underground cable between structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy-Spring Creek

transmission line and structure 17/5 on the Big Eddy-Knight transmission line.

- During installation of underground cable at Spring Creek, Wine Country, and Wautoma substations.
- During installation of 17 underground fiber vaults.

Mitigation: Erosion control measures would be used during construction to minimize impacts. Any disturbed soil would be restored by reseeding.

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



Explanation: No special status species present. The dominant land use in the project area is agriculture, which includes rangeland and field crops. Tree limbing would occur along the access road near structure 31/4 on the Big Eddy-Spring Creek No. 1 line. Some scrub-shrub vegetation would be disturbed during installation of wood poles, guy wires, anchors, and underground cable as described in the Geology and Soils section above. Some herbaceous vegetation may be temporarily impacted at 17 reel-puller sites during fiber installation.

Mitigation: Disturbed soil would be reseeded. Construction vehicles and equipment would be inspected and cleaned if necessary for weeds prior to accessing the project site.

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



Explanation: No special status species present. The dominant land use in the project area is agriculture, which includes rangeland and field crops, and therefore local wildlife would be accustomed to noise and activities associated with the temporary use of large equipment.

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



Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish are present.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed.

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



Explanation: The dominant land use in the project vicinity is agriculture, which includes rangeland and field crops. All work on existing BPA fee-owned ROW. There are no specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The addition of the fiber optic cable would not change the existing visual appearance of the transmission line.

10. **Air Quality**



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

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary increase in noise during construction.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Proposed activities will have no effect human health and 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.

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**

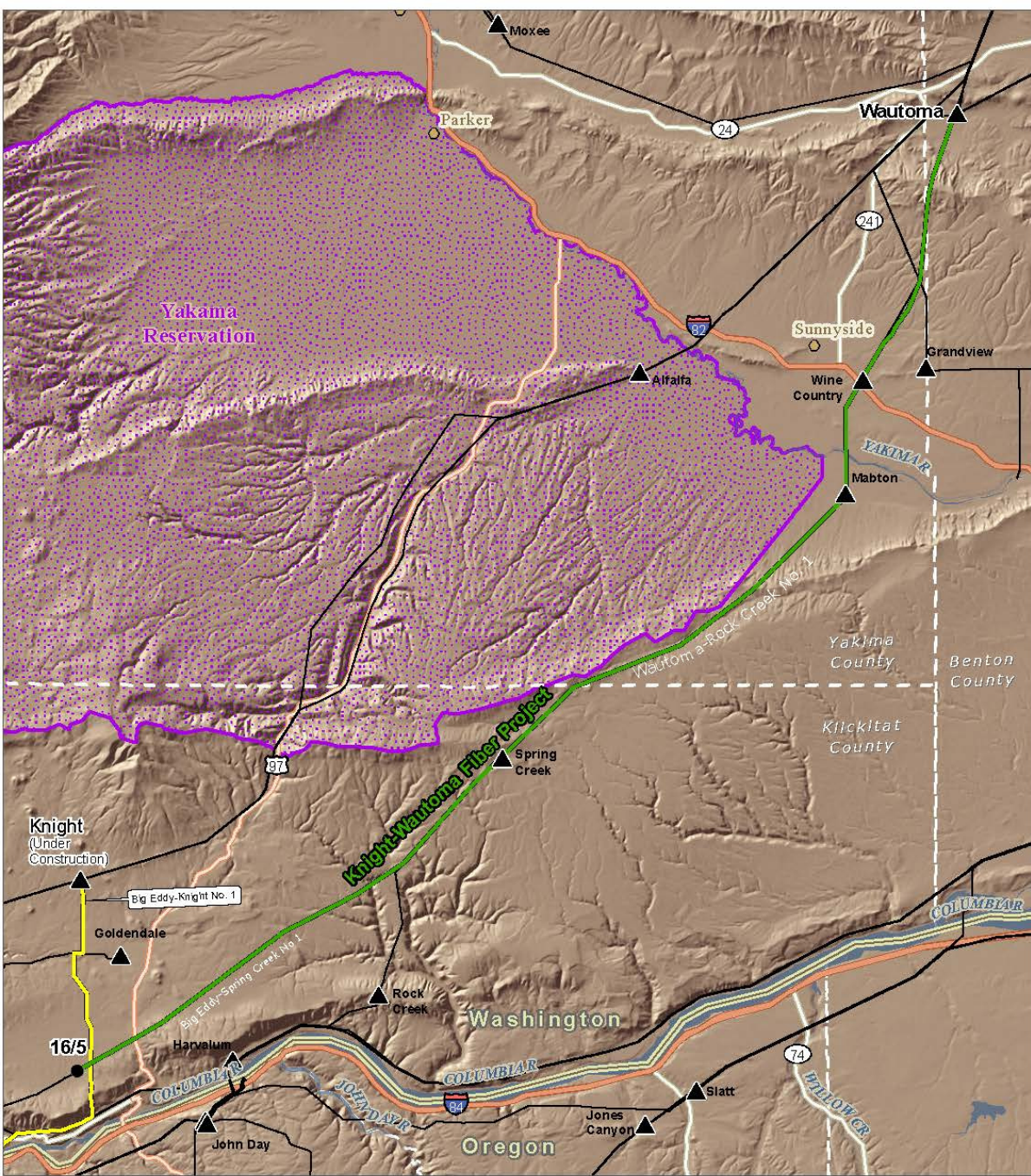
Description: BPA engineers and realty specialist coordinated with landowners regarding installation of vaults and fiber optic wood poles. BPA will provide another notification 45-60 days prior to initiating construction.

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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/ Justin T. Moffett

Date: February 1, 2016



### Knight-Wautoma Fiber Project Area Map



- Knight-Wautoma Fiber Project
- Big Eddy-Knight No. 1
- BPA Transmission Line
- BPA Transmission Tower
- BPA Substations
- Indian Reservation
- County Border



March 18, 2013