

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Spearfish Tap Maintenance

**Project Manager:** Todd Wehner, TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Klickitat County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to conduct maintenance activities along its 3.2-mile long 115-kV Spearfish Tap to Chenoweth-Goldendale (Spearfish Tap) transmission line in Klickitat County, Washington. The maintenance is necessary to address old and worn-out wood-pole structures and transmission line components to ensure electrical reliability.

Maintenance activities would include replacement of about 35 deteriorating wood-pole structures (including cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) with similar structures and materials in or within 100 feet of the current structure locations, as well as minor maintenance (including blading, shaping, or rocking) of landings at structure sites (approximately a 50-foot by 50-foot area) and along existing access roads as necessary to improve access and safely support equipment within the transmission line corridor.

In order to maintain power delivery to Spearfish Substation (which is owned by Klickitat PUD) during the maintenance activities, BPA would construct a temporary 0.5-mile transmission line (shoofly). The temporary shoofly would be made of standard structures—wood H-frame and single pole—and conductor. The temporary line would run west to east starting on the north side of the Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1 structure 3/5 and terminating on the north side of the Spearfish Tap to Chenoweth-Goldendale line structure 2/1. The shoofly would be removed once maintenance activities were complete.

Equipment needed to perform the work would include a line truck with auger attachment, small crane for lifting tower components, and bucket trucks. A bulldozer may be used at the tower sites to ensure that equipment can be operated safely.

**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/ Elizabeth Siping

Elizabeth Siping  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 26, 2017

Attachment: 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:** Spearfish Tap Maintenance

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## Project Site Description

The maintenance activities would take place within existing disturbed transmission line corridor across private scrub-shrub land, agriculture orchards, and industrial property. The proposed temporary shoofly would run adjacent to scattered industrial buildings.

## 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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The Department of Archaeology &amp; Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred with BPA’s determination of no adverse effect on April 26, 2017. Consulting parties for this project include: Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Nez Perce Tribe, and the U.S. Forest Service. No response was received from those tribes of the U.S. Forest Service.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u> In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Washington SHPO, and the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies.</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>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Pole replacements would be done within 100 feet of current locations. Minor maintenance of landings and access roads may be required to improve access and safely support equipment within the transmission line corridor. Shoofly installations and associated landings would disturb approximately 50-feet by 50-feet of ground.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explanation: No special-status species are known to occur in the project area. Some grasses and shrubs would be disturbed, no trees would be removed and all disturbed areas would be reseeded.

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



Explanation: No special-status species are known to occur at the site. General wildlife that may be in the area would likely temporarily leave while equipment is present.

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



Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are present at or near the project site.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater is proposed.

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



Explanation: No permanent change to land use is proposed. The project site is within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). Structures 1/1 through 3/10 and the proposed shoofly are within a designated Urban Area that is exempt from CRGNSA regulations. Although structures 3/11 thru 4/11 are within the "A-1 Large-Scale Ag" designation, BPA activities necessary to ensure safe operation and maintenance of an existing transmission facility fall under a BPA saving provision contained in the CRGNSA Act that exempt these activities from management plan consistency review. BPA is coordinating with the USFS.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The wood poles would look the same as existing structures and would be placed in the same location or within 100 feet. The temporary shoofly would be a 0.5-mile long, wood H-frame.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: A temporary increase in noise would occur during construction.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact to human health and safety is anticipated.

### **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's Realty Specialist has notified landowners of the proposed project and has coordinated with them for access to project areas. BPA is continuing to coordinate with the USFS for activities within the CRGNSA.

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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/ Elizabeth Siping  
Elizabeth Siping  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: May 26, 2017