

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Rock Creek Substation Expansion

**Project Manager:** Mike Marleu

**Location:** Klickitat County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B.4.11 Electric power substation and interconnection facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to expand BPA's Rock Creek Substation to install a new spare 500/230kV transformer and associated structural footings. The spare transformer is a large electrical piece of equipment that contains approximately 13,800 gallons of mineral oil, once installed. Within the existing electrical switchyard, approximately eight new pedestal footings and associated pedestals would be installed to support the new electrical bus support work. An oil containment liner and an additional oil containment pre-cast concrete vault would be installed for the new transformer and plumbed into the existing oil containment vault system. An existing access road, inside the substation, would be lengthened by approximately 90 feet. An additional access road, approximately 100 feet in length off the existing permitted road entrance, would also be installed with a new gate to provide additional access to the substation.

The substation switchyard would be expanded approximately 0.1 acres into a previously disturbed area to install the new, spare transformer. Total ground disturbing site development work is approximately 0.8 acres, including the new construction access road and stormwater detention ponds. All ground disturbing activities would be confined to imported fill material or previously disturbed natural soils. The construction would be expected to be up to 4 feet in depth, and about 2000 cubic yards of soil waste would be disposed of in an approved landfill site. Prior disturbances occurred in 2008 when the entire Rock Creek Substation was constructed to help transmit new electrical generation associated with the adjacent windfarms and again in 2010 when the substation expanded to make room for an additional 230kV terminal. Best management practices for dust management and erosion control would be utilized.

**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/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason  
Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 22, 2017

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:** Rock Creek Substation Expansion

### Project Site Description

The substation expansion area sites, outside the existing fenced substation for the new transformer and access road extension, are comprised of gravel, rock, and small brush and grass areas. Site areas within the fenced substation area are hardscaped or gravel substation areas.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would occur in an area on that has been previously disturbed and surveyed for historic and cultural resources. BPA archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these activities at Rock Creek Substation do not have potential to cause effects to historic properties.</p>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would involve soil disturbance on about 0.8 acres of substation property and removal of about 2000 cubic yards of soil waste to an approved landfill facility. Best management practices (BMPs) for dust management and erosion control would be utilized.</p>		
<b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would have minimal impacts to plants. Some low growing grasses and shrubs in the previously disturbed natural soils in expansion area would be removed.</p>		
<b>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The Rock Creek Substation property has low quality habitat for wildlife and thus would have minimal to no impacts to wildlife.</p>		
<b>5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Project would occur on Rock Creek Substation property without impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and fish. The closest water body is Rock Creek that is located about 1.8 miles from the project area.</p>		
<b>6. Wetlands</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The substation property has no wetlands, so no impacts to wetlands would occur.</p>		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Excavation up to 4 feet in depth would not impact groundwater or aquifers. The transformer would be contained within an oil containment system at the substation.

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



Explanation: Project would occur on Rock Creek Substation property consistent with existing substation land use without impacts to land use and specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Project would be consistent with the visual quality of Rock Creek Substation property without impacts to current visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Project would occur on Rock Creek Substation property without lasting impacts to air quality. BMPs for dust management and erosion control would be utilized.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise would not have lasting impacts. The spare transformer would generate the same or less noise than the three older existing transformers, and would only be used as a back-up as needed.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No human health and safety impacts are expected. The new transformer would be installed and fenced within the substation property, and plumbed into the existing oil containment system.

### 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: No notification is planned as all work would be on BPA owned facility land for the Rock Creek substation and neighboring landowners would not be impacted by the expansion as there are no residences nearby.

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

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey / ECT-4

Date: May 22, 2017