

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Grandview-Red Mountain No. 1 Pole Replacement Project

PP&A No.: 3676

Project Manager: Todd Wehner-TEP-TPP-1

Location: Benton 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) owns and operates the 115 kV Grandview-Red Mountain No. 1 high voltage transmission line that runs from Grandview Substation in Yakima County, WA to Red Mountain Substation in Benton County, WA.

In line mile 20 of the line from the Grandview Substation, the transmission line crosses the Yakima River. Structures 20/3 and 20/4 are located on an island in the Yakima River over 100 feet from the bank. These structures are aging and in need of replacement. BPA proposes to replace these structures with 65 ft. new steel pole structures. The structures would be replaced in the same location as the existing wood pole structures. To complete the work, BPA proposes to cross the Yakima River at the low-flow in-water work period with a large tracked excavator. All other materials and equipment would be flown to the work sites with a helicopter.

At the work site, BPA would remove the existing wood pole structures via excavation. BPA would then dig an approximately 8.5 ft. hole and install the new steel H frame transmission structures. The holes would be backfilled and compacted with native materials, and additional select backfill if necessary. Crossbars and other hardware would be installed, along with the electrical conductor. The area would then be restored with a climate appropriate seed mix and stabilized with straw.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 26, 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: Grandview-Red Mountain No. 1 Pole Replacement

Project Site Description

Structures 20/3 and 20/4 of the Grandview-Red Mountain No. 1 transmission line are located on an undeveloped island in the Yakima River, in central Washington, in the Columbia River valley. Local land use is agricultural and rural residential. The work area is an uplands habitat, with grassy vegetation and some sparse shrubs. The island is approximately 26 acres, and is isolated to the west by the main channel of the Yakima River (approx. 250 feet wide) and to the north and east by a side channel of the Yakima River (approx. 50 feet wide).

Township		Range		Section
9	N	27	E	6

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> No cultural resources were documented during the review and survey process of the work area. BPA has therefore determined that project activity would have no adverse effect on cultural resources. The Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation issued a letter of concurrence with BPA findings on February 6, 2017. In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribe’s cultural staff and cultural committee notified.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> All ground-disturbing activity would occur in areas that have previously been disturbed. Following pole replacement, excavated sediment would be utilized as backfill material. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized, and the disturbed soils would be stabilized and seeded following project completion.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/state special-status species are present in the project area. Some riparian vegetation may be crushed by the excavator, but larger root systems should remain intact and vegetation should recover. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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



Explanation: The project is located on an island of the Yakima River. Although all project materials would be transported to the site by helicopter, one excavator must cross the side channel of the Yakima River to get to the project location. The excavator would cross the river twice, once to get to the project location and once to leave. To minimize impact, the excavator would cross the narrowest part of the stream perpendicular to the direction of flow.

The Yakima River is an endangered fish stream, with documented bull trout, steelhead, and salmon species present. BPA has consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding potential impacts to anadromous fish. Please see the accompanying Effects Determination Memo for more information regarding endangered fish species.

Mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize potential impacts to fish species during the stream crossing, including conducting the crossing within the in-water work window, and crossing the channel perpendicular to the bank of the river to limit time within the river.

Additionally, the excavator would be power washed, allowed to fully dry, inspected for fluid leaks, and inspected to ensure no plants, soil, or other organic material are adhering to the surface, in accordance with the biological opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), prior to entering the channel.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures will be utilized during construction activities. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The existing 60-foot tall wood poles would be replaced by 65-foot tall steel poles. Although the new poles are slightly taller and comprised of a different material, the difference in visual quality would be minimal.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project would have no significant impacts on air quality; however, a small, temporary amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or safety. In addition, replacing the aging structures will help to provide reliable power in the area.

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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: All activities would be coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann
Emma Reinemann
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 26, 2017