

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2017 Wood Pole Replacement and Access Road Maintenance within Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) Idaho Falls District

Project No. (if applicable): 3645

Project Manager: Mark Hadley, Line Foreman III – TFIF-Idaho Falls

Location: Fremont, Teton, and Custer counties, Idaho.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Macks Inn-Madison	5/7	14N	44E	22	Fremont, ID	Caribou-Targhee USFS /Forest
Swan Valley-Teton	21/3	03N	46E	30	Teton, ID	Caribou-Targhee USFS /Forest
*Cross arm replacement only						
Lost River-Spar Canyon	20/2	07N	24E	24	Custer, ID	Idaho Falls District BLM/Range
	41/5	10N	22E	30	Custer, ID	Idaho Falls District BLM/Range
Spar Canyon-Round Valley	3/2	12N	20E	26	Custer, ID	Idaho Falls District BLM/Range
	10/5	13N	20E	33	Custer, ID	Idaho Falls District BLM/Range

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 deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) at the locations specified in the Location section of this document. 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 and braces may be changed out along the lines. New landing construction or access road development is not planned at these locations. Minor maintenance of landing and roads within their existing road and landing prisms may be required.

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/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *April 25, 2017*

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.

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Project Site Description

The project activities would be conducted on BPA transmission line rights-of-way. The site locations primarily consist of Federal lands (USFS and BLM). The project area ranges from mostly flat to mountainous terrain. Vegetation consists of grasses and steppe shrub, and managed rights-of-way.

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>BPA archeological approval and Idaho SHPO concurrence on no adverse effect determination was received on March 20, 2017. Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation and the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation were consulted—no response received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inadvertent discovery form should be provided and explained to the road contractor. In the event of an inadvertent discovery, work would immediately cease and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist would be notified. 		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project will require minimal ground-disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands will be affected.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no special status-species within project area. No vegetation removal is expected; however, any disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings, and within 15 feet from the poles will be reseeded.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species and habitats were identified within project area. No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species.</p>		

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



Explanation: None present in project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: None present in project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No impact to water resources. 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 and no specially designated areas identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



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

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar 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 adversely impact human health or safety. The proposed action will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

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

Description: Notification letters will be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to all landowners prior to work commencing. Notification to USFS was given on March 28th, 2017, during annual planning meeting.

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: April 25, 2017