

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Demoss - Fossil Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement Project

PP&A Project No.: 3825

Project Manager: Gerri Colburn – TEPO-TPP-1

Location: Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties, Oregon

Transmission Line	Structure	Township	Range	Section(s)	County	Ownership/Land-use
Demoss-Fossil	6/3	01S	18E		Sherman	Private/Range
	48/3	03N	21E	28	Gilliam	Private/Range
	49/7	06S	21E		Wheeler	Private/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-pole structures (including cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along the specified locations. Replacement would be in-kind, having the same height and configuration as the original. New poles would either be placed back in existing holes, or an auger attached to a backhoe would be used to drill new holes approximately 5 feet ahead or back on-line from existing poles. Unless further limited to protect sensitive plants or cultural resources, ground disturbance would not extend beyond the width of the right-of-way and 100 feet on each side of the structure. Maintenance or improvement of landings may be required to allow for safe working conditions.

Heavy equipment would be used to conduct the work and would include the following: pole truck, dump truck with trailer, backhoe, crane, boom truck, bucket truck, work trucks with trailers, and small bull dozer. Equipment and materials would be staged only in designated areas. Once work is completed, all equipment and debris would be removed from the project area.

No unauthorized construction activities would occur in any water body including streams, ponds, or wetlands.

The proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work would 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: *November 27, 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 are on private lands. The project area ranges from mostly flat to rolling terrain. Vegetation on the right-of-way consists of grasses and steppe shrubs.

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>Oregon SHPO concurrence of “no adverse effect” determination was received on March 29, 2016. Yakama, Nez Perce, and Warm Springs Tribes were consulted—no response received.</p> <p>In the event of an inadvertent discovery, work would immediately cease and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist would be notified.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would require minimal ground-disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. All disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings, and 15 feet from the poles would be reseeded.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. No vegetation removal is expected; however, any disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings, and 15 feet from the poles would be reseeded as conditions allow.</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 present. 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: 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 would be similar to existing structures and would not be noticeably different than existing structures.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. In addition, the proposed action would 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

Notification letters would be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to all other landowners prior to work.

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: November 27, 2017