

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY19 North Bend Transmission Line Maintenance (TLM) District Priority Poles and Access Road Maintenance Project

PP&A No.: 4,112

Project Manager: Lisa Casey – TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Lane, Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties, Oregon

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 15 structures and improve access roads on the Fairview-Bandon No.1, Reedsport-Fairview No. 1, Rogue-Gold Beach No.1, Tahkenitch-Reedsport No. 1, and Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 1 transmission lines. These lines are located in BPA's North Bend TLM District (Table 1). The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing transmission line infrastructure and access roads. The proposed project would include the following work elements:

- Replacement of 15 wood pole transmission structures (in-kind),
- Addition of fiber to 4 structures,
- Reconstruction of approximately 400 feet of existing access roads (re-shape subgrade and place rock),
- Improvement of approximately 2 miles of existing access roads (re-grade surface and place rock), including maintenance of associated drainage features (water bars, cross drain culverts, drain dips), and
- Construct/improve ten equipment landings (approximately 50 feet x 50 feet).

If needed, additional project work may include: grading and shaping of existing equipment landings and roads, installation of geotextile material, placement of crushed rock, compacting road surface, and maintenance of gates and drainage features.

The work would be done using conventional utility line and construction equipment and techniques.

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, Jul. 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/ Michelle Colletti
Michelle Colletti
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: March 8, 2021
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

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: FY19 North Bend Transmission Line Maintenance (TLM) District Priority Poles and Access Road Maintenance Project

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in Lane, Douglas, Curry, and Coos counties, Oregon. The majority of work locations are in upland areas between the Oregon Coast Mountain Range and the Pacific Ocean. Structures 16/3 and 16/4 on the Fairview-Bandon No. 1 line are located adjacent to wetland areas. Structures 4/23 and 5/4 on the Tahkenitch – Reedsport No. 1 line are located in the City of Reedsport. Table 1 below describes location and land use for all proposed project locations.

Table 1.

Transmission Line	Structure	Township/Range/Section	County, State	Land ownership /use
Fairview-Bandon No. 1	16/3	OR T28S R13W SEC36	Coos, OR	private, timber
	16/4	OR T28S R13W SEC37	Coos, OR	private, timber
	16/5	OR T28S R13W SEC35	Coos, OR	private
	16/7	OR T28S R13W SEC35	Coos, OR	private, agricultural
	17/1	OR T28S R13W SEC36	Coos, OR	private
	17/5	OR T28S R13W SEC34	Coos, OR	private, timber
Reedsport - Fairview No. 1	1/3	OR T22S R12W SEC4	Douglas, OR	residential
	13/6	OR T23S R13W SEC36	Coos, OR	private, timber
	13/7	OR T23S R13W SEC36	Coos, OR	private, timber
	19/4	OR T24S R12W SEC29	Coos, OR	private, timber
	37/1	OR T27S R12W SEC15	Coos, OR	BLM
	37/6	OR T27S R12W SEC23	Coos, OR	BLM
	38/2	OR T27S R12W SEC23	Coos, OR	BLM
38/3	OR T27S R12W SEC 23	Coos, OR	BLM	
Rogue - Gold Beach No. 1	6/3	OR T36S R41W SEC31	Curry, OR	private, forested
Tahkenitch - Reedsport No. 1	4/23	OR T21S R12W SEC34	Douglas, OR	residential
	5/3	Fiber only	Douglas, OR	residential
	5/4	OR T22S R12W SEC3	Douglas, OR	residential
	5/5	Fiber only	Douglas, OR	residential
Wendson-Tahkentich No. 1	5/2	OR T19S R11W SEC3	Lane, OR	private, timber

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, Coquille Indian Tribe, United States Bureau of Land Management – Coos Bay District, and United States Forest Service - Siuslaw National Forest on June 13, 2019. Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via letters dated July 9 (Above-ground) and 16 (Archaeology), 2019. BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on January 24, 2020, and OR SHPO concurred on June 26, 2020. No additional response was received within 30 days.

In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity would stop, the area would be secured, and the BPA archaeologist and the environmental project lead would be notified. The BPA archaeologist would notify consulting parties. Work would not commence until the SHPO has cleared the area.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All wood pole replacements would be in-kind and be placed in the same location as the existing poles. Minor augering of the existing holes may be necessary. The proposed roadway improvements would reduce erosion and degradation of the existing access roads. All disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be seeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region, and mulched, to further stabilize soils. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. Therefore, the proposed action would have limited temporary impacts to geology and soils.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Other than Tahkentich-Reedsport #1 structures 4/23 and 5/4, located in the City of Reedsport, all project activities would take place in upland areas within maintained transmission rights-of-way and access roads. These project areas exhibit considerably different vegetation than the surrounding dense forest vegetation, and lack suitable habitat characteristics for sensitive plant species found in this region, which tend to favor lowlands and wetlands. Thus, it is unlikely that Federal or state special-status plant species would occur within project areas. All disturbed soils would be seeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region, and then mulched, immediately following construction. Therefore, the proposed action would not affect special-status plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status have been documented near the proposed project areas. Therefore, the project would not impact Federal/state special-status wildlife species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. Oregon Coast coho salmon are present in the general project area; however, the proposed project activities are in upland areas at least 350 feet from permanent and seasonal waterways with documented coho presence. No impacts to water, floodplains, or fish are expected to result from the proposed project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Other than structures 16/3 and 16/4 on the Fairview-Bandon No. 1, project areas are located in uplands and project activities do not have the potential to impact wetlands. The proposed work on structures 16/3 and 16/4 to add fiber to the poles on the Fairview-Bandon No. 1 line would require no ground-disturbing activities.

Notes:

- Wetland mats would be used to access the structures on 16/3 and 16/4 if soils are unstable.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use is proposed as part of the project. No specially-designated areas were identified within the project limits. The project would not result in changes or impacts to land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not alter visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery 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.

Explanation: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty would contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners prior to project construction. Coordination with the Bureau of Land Management occurred in October of 2020.

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

Signed: /s/ Michelle Colletti
Michelle Colletti, EPR-4
Physical Scientist

Date: March 8, 2021