

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Grouse Mountain Communications Site and  
Granby Pumping Plant - Mary's Lake 69-kV Transmission Line Easement Exchange  
Grand County, Colorado  
Project Number: 2017-061**

- A. **Brief Description of Proposal:** Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) proposes to exchange its Grouse Mountain Communications Site equipment for additional easement rights on one of its existing transmission lines. WAPA has owned and operated the Grouse Mountain Communication Site located on U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service lands under a Special Use Permit since 1994. The site is located in the Southwest 1/4 of Section 18, Township 2 North, Range 78 West of the 6<sup>th</sup> Principle Meridian, near the town of Hot Sulphur Springs, in Grand County, Colorado and is adjacent to another utilities' communications site.

Mountain Parks Electric, Inc., a local electrical provider cooperative, has expressed interest in obtaining the Grouse Mountain Communication Site and understands that they would need to obtain a Special Use Permit from the Forest Service to maintain and operate the site. WAPA no longer has a need for the Grouse Mountain Communications Site facilities. WAPA has identified the need to widen and redefine the terms and conditions of its existing Granby Pumping Plant - Mary's Lake 69-kV Transmission Line easement that is presently located on land now owned by Mountain Parks Electric, Inc. The current easement on the WAPA transmission line right-of-way (ROW) is inadequate and acquiring the additional easement from Mountain Parks would provide for a more adequate easement for safety and routine maintenance.

The WAPA-owned equipment at the Grouse Mountain Communications Site consists of the following Structures, a 120-foot self-supporting steel lattice tower, one 10 foot x 22 foot fiberglass equipment shelter, metal foot bridges that access the tower from the roof of the fiberglass shelter (ice bridges), and an underground propane tank. As part of the agreement, all of the Grouse Mountain equipment would be transferred from WAPA to Mountain Parks Electric, Inc. In exchange for the equipment on site, WAPA would obtain an additional 70-feet of easement width along a 303-foot length of its 69-kV Transmission Line on property owned by Mountain Parks Electric, Inc. The property easement is located within 400-feet west of the Mountain Parks Inc. McKenzie Substation located in Grand Lake, Colorado.

- B. **Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied:** (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

**B1.24 Property Transfers**

Transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests in personal property (including, but not limited to, equipment and materials) or real property (including, but not limited to, permanent structures and land), provided that under reasonably foreseeable uses (1) there would be no potential for release of substances at a level, or in a form, that could pose a threat to public health or the environment and (2) the covered actions would not have the potential to cause a significant change in impacts from before the transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests.

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**C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b): (See full text in regulation and attached checklist.)**

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D. For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements. To fit within a class, the proposal must 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), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;
  - 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;
  - Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, State, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to, those listed in paragraph B. (4) (see Attachment A).
- 2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.
- 3) The proposal is not “connected” to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

**D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:**

This Categorical Exclusion is valid until this agreement is finalized for exchange of this equipment and easement. If the scope of work of this project changes, WAPA's Environmental Division must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.

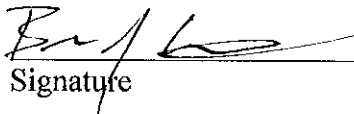
All WAPA property is transferred and delivered as is. WAPA makes no warranty of any kind on any property being transferred or delivered.

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WAPA is not acquiring any fee title land. The agreement is to widen and redefine the terms and conditions of the existing transmission line easement.

- E. Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.

  
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Signature

Date: 3 APRIL 2017

Brian Little  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region  
Western Area Power Administration

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**ATTACHMENT A**

**Conditions That Are Integral Elements of the Classes  
of Actions in Appendix B That Apply to This Proposal**

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources.		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
<b>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.</b>	NO	YES	Unknown
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;	X		
(3) 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;	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or	X		

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local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:			
(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(ii) Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii) Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv) Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v) Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor;	X		
(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests; or	X		

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(5) 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.	X		
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