

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Wireless Communication Upgrades at Verizon Happy Valley Site

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian—TELP-TPP-3

Location: Pierce County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow Verizon to upgrade their antennas and equipment at an existing wireless site on a BPA transmission tower in western Washington. The work would consist of removing nine antennas and replacing those with nine new antennas. Six new diplexers and 3 T modems would be mounted behind the antennas. Additional equipment upgrades would take place within Verizon's equipment compound at the base of the tower. To ensure safety, BPA workers and their subcontractors would complete the wireless antenna and coaxial cable installation work. The project does not involve any ground excavation.

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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Staffing & Recruiting

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Office

Date: July 12, 2018

Attachment: 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.

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Project Site Description

The site is in a rural residential area, in Puyallup, Washington; along the South Tacoma-White River-1 transmission line, on tower 3/4. The project area is in Section 20, Township 19 North, Range 4 East. The antenna and equipment replacements would occur on an existing transmission structure located within the existing transmission line corridor. The site has had prior ground disturbance.

The vegetation at the site consists of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), spirea (*Spirea douglasii*), buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.), Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*), horsetail (*Equisitum* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), thistle (*Cirsium* spp.), and St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*).

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><u>Explanation:</u> BPA Cultural staff have reviewed the proposed activities and determined that there is no potential to cause effects to historic properties because the location is in an area that has had extensive ground disturbance as a result of the development of the utility corridor. Additionally, the structure is easily accessible by a graveled access road and the project would not require ground disturbance and the replacement of the existing antennas would not be a significant change to the utility corridor. No additional review under the National Historic Preservation Act is needed for this undertaking.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project does not involve ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impacts to geology or soils.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A site visit determined that the project location does not have any special status plants. The project would have no impacts to any special-status plants.</p> <p>To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be required to be cleaned before entering the project location.</p>		

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



Explanation: There are no recorded occurrences of Mazama pocket gophers within a five mile radius of the project area; however, the project site has Kapowsin gravelly ashy loam soils, which are characteristic of soils that Mazama pocket gophers may inhabit. In the unlikely event that this species occurred at this location, there would be no impacts to this species because all construction vehicles would stay on the existing access road and all work would be performed from the access road.

There are also no recorded occurrences of Taylor's checkerspot butterfly within a five mile radius of the project area; however, there is a slight chance that this butterfly species could be present, although it is unlikely since the majority of its nectar and oviposition plants are not found at this location. The equipment upgrades would occur outside the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly's flight period (April-May), and no nectar or oviposition plants would be removed.

There would be no impacts to special-status species because the work would occur from the existing access road and would not disrupt or eliminate existing habitat.

If any active nests are found on the structures prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nest is unoccupied.

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



Explanation: The project areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains, or listed fish species; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: A low-quality wetland exists near the northwest side of the tower. The construction vehicles would be prohibited from going off of the existing access road. No removal/fill activities are occurring for this project; therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project does not involve any ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change to land use at the project location. There are no specially designated areas at this location.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the utility corridor.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impact to human health and safety.

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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project proponent is responsible for acquiring and maintaining an easement for their facility with the underlying landowner.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger
Beth Belanger, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Staffing & Recruiting

Date: July 12, 2018