

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Northern Lights, Inc. Equipment Relocation at Troy Substation

LURR Number: 20170449

Project Manager: Dustin Smith, TERR-Kalispell

Location: Lincoln County, Montana

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Northern Lights, Inc. (NLI) to remove equipment from within the BPA control house at the Troy Substation, and install new equipment, that would serve the same function, on a new concrete pad outside of the substation's fence.

To create a level surface for the new concrete pad, an area approximately 10 feet wide by 20 feet long would be graded. A trench (approximately 18 inches wide and up to 20 feet long by 30 inches deep) would be excavated between the concrete pad and a nearby NLI distribution pole where new conduit and cables would be installed.

The concrete pad (approximately 4 feet wide by 15 feet long by 1 foot deep) would be located on BPA fee-owned property, approximately 40 feet east of the Troy substation's eastern chain link fence. A transformer, meter, disconnect switch and enclosures for communications equipment would be installed on top of the concrete pad. Once the new equipment is installed, tested and approved, then the old equipment would be removed from the control house.

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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 9, 2018

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 to environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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Project Site Description

The project is located on BPA fee-owned property at the Troy Substation, which is located approximately 0.6-mile southeast of the town of Troy, Montana. In Township 31 North, Range 33 West, Section 19, the Troy Substation is located in mountainous and rugged terrain at 2,100 feet elevation. The Troy Substation is situated on a ridgeline with the Kootenai River located approximately 0.25-mile northwest of, and 200 feet lower in elevation than, the substation.

The area surrounding the substation is dominated by pine forests. Highway 2 is located about 120 feet south of the substation, and an active 30-acre rock quarry is located about 900 feet north of the substation. The location of the new equipment pad is within the Libby-Bonnars Ferry No. 1 transmission line right-of-way and is managed by BPA for low growing vegetation.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The BPA contract archaeologist initiated Section 106 consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho on October 6, 2017. Montana SHPO requested additional information of BPA on October 17, 2017.</p> <p>On June 4, 2018, BPA determined that No Historic Properties would be affected as a result of the proposed undertaking. Montana SHPO concurred with this determination on June 12, 2018. No responses were received from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes or the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.</p> <p>Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the EC lead should be notified immediately.</p>		
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented prior to any vegetation and ground disturbing activities.</p>		
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of any plant species listed under the ESA in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on ESA-listed plant species. The vegetation that could be disturbed as a result of project activities include: native and non-native grasses, forbs, sapling pine trees, yarrow (<i>Achillea</i> spp.), three-spot Marioposa lily (<i>Calochortus apiculatus</i>), Dalmation ToadFlax (<i>Linaria dalmatica</i>), Common Hound's tongue (<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>), <i>Penstomen</i> spp., <i>Campanula</i> spp., and creeping Oregon grape (<i>Berberis repens</i>).</p>		

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



Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any wildlife species listed under the ESA in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on ESA-listed wildlife species.

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



Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains or fish habitat present in the project area; therefore, no water bodies, floodplains or fish habitat would be impacted by the project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands present in the project area; therefore, no wetlands would be impacted by the project.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater are proposed with this project.

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



Explanation: There are no specially-designated land use areas in the project area.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project area has already been developed as part of the substation property with existing transmission lines. The addition of a concrete pad and equipment in this area would not significantly change the visual quality of the site.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emissions could increase in the local area during construction activities. The applicant would implement BMPs to reduce emissions and dust levels.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary noise could increase in the local area during construction activities. The applicant would implement BMPs to reduce noise levels.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to health and human safety as a result of this project.

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 area is located on BPA fee owned property. NLI is responsible for coordinating with adjacent landowners, as appropriate.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: July 9, 2018