



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Herbicide Application at 18 Substations located in Arizona and California, 2018-2023

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration/ Desert Southwest Region

Location(s) (City/County/State): Arizona & California

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) Desert Southwest Region (DSW) plans to apply pre-emergent, post-emergent, UV Inhibitor herbicides annually as necessary, which will include spray marking dyes, at 18 substations in Arizona and California. These 18 substations, operated and maintained by WAPA, include: Adams, Bouse, Casa Grande, Coolidge, Flagstaff, Gila, Glen Canyon, Kofa, Liberty, Mexico Tap, Oracle, Parker, Phoenix, Pinnacle Peak, Prescott, Sonora, Sundance, and Test Track.

This work is needed to maintain the reliability and safety of the bulk electric system. For example, live or dead vegetation sticking up through a grounded work platform adjacent to energized equipment may circumvent the grounding protection and result in an injury to a worker standing on the platform.

WAPA will apply herbicides using either hand tools or vehicular-mounted equipment within each substation as well extending 5-feet outside the perimeter fence where possible. Applications are expected to occur intermittently and may be repeated based on regrowth. Vegetation may be cut or pulled to achieve a bare earth standard. Pulled vegetation will be removed off-site and disposed of properly.

Special Conditions: See attached continuation sheet for special conditions.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.3 - Routine maintenance

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of [10 CFR Part 1021](#).

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (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; (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; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This 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 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: **Matthew D. Blevins** Digitally signed by Matthew D. Blevins
Date: 2018.10.10 05:54:22 -06'00'

Date Determined: 10/10/2018

Substation Herbicide and Vegetation Management

Continuation Sheet

WAPA plans to spray pre-emergent, post-emergent, UV Inhibitor herbicides, which will include spray marking dyes, at the following 18 substations that are operated and maintained by WAPA in Arizona and California. The herbicides will suppress any future regeneration and/or regrowth and promote low lying plant communities after vegetation removal occurs.

WAPA will apply the herbicides using either hand tools or vehicular-mounted equipment within each substation as well extending 5-feet outside the perimeter fence where permitted.

Applications are expected to occur intermittently and will be repeated based on regrowth.

Vegetation may be cut or pulled to achieve a bare earth standard. Pulled vegetation will be moved off-site and disposed of properly.

Workers and/or contractors applying herbicides shall be licensed and certified for such work by all appropriate jurisdictions.

Workers and/or contractors applying the herbicides shall follow manufacturer's instructions located on the label and all Federal, State, Tribal, and local codes and regulations.

Herbicides must be approved by the applicable land management agency and registered for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Herbicide Spraying and Application conditions for each substation as necessary:

1. Adams Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

a. Pima pineapple cactus surveys will be conducted within 14-days prior to herbicide application. If Pima pineapple cactus is found within 50-feet of the substation fence, then no herbicides shall be used outside of the fenced facility and only hand or mechanical removal vegetation will be allowed outside of the fence and up to 10-feet of flagged Pima pineapple cactus.

2. Bouse Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

3. Casa Grande Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

4. Coolidge Substation (Arizona)

a. Avoid herbicide spraying on agricultural fields surrounding the substation.

5. Flagstaff Substation (Coconino National Forest, Arizona)

6. Gila Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

a. Herbicide applications will only occur within the fenced substation and not outside it. Mechanical or hand tool removal of vegetation outside the fenced substation is acceptable.

7. Glen Canyon Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

8. Kofa Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

9. Liberty Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

a. Avoid herbicide spraying on agricultural fields surrounding the substation.

10. Mexico Tap Substation (Bureau of Reclamation, Arizona)

11. Oracle Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

12. Parker Substation (Bureau of Reclamation, California)

a. Avoid herbicide spraying outside the area surrounding the substation.

b. For herbicide application during the tortoise active season of March 1 to October 31, a qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-work survey within 7-days of work initiation for Mojave Desert tortoise. The biologist shall survey all work areas, including staging/laydown areas and access routes. Tortoise burrows and other sensitive features identified during the pre-work survey shall be flagged and monitored by the qualified biologist during herbicide application. If a tortoise is found in the work area during the pre-work survey or herbicide application, activities will be modified to avoid injury or harm.

c. For herbicide application during the tortoise inactive season of November 1 to February 28, a pre-work survey and tortoise monitoring by a qualified biologist during herbicide application are not required. If a tortoise is found in the work area during herbicide application, all activities within 50-feet of the tortoise will be ceased immediately and DSW's Environmental Manager will be contacted for instructions before work is resumed.

13. Phoenix Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

14. Pinnacle Peak Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

15. Prescott Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

16. Sonora Substation (Bureau of Land Management, Arizona)

17. Sundance Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

a. Avoid herbicide spraying on or near the water treatment plant facility.

18. Test Track Substation (WAPA, Arizona)

- a. Avoid herbicide spraying on agricultural fields surrounding the substation.

Biological Resource Concerns

1. DSW's Vegetation Management Specialist shall notify DSW's Environmental Manager at least 30-days prior to the start of herbicide application at Adams and Parker substations to arrange biological compliance activities.
2. Due to their known adverse effects to some wildlife, DSW's Vegetation Management Specialist and all DSW Contractor personnel shall not use 2,4-D or 2,4,5-T herbicides at Parker substation in California.
3. DSW's Environmental Team shall provide environmental awareness training to WAPA's Vegetation Management Specialist and all WAPA Contractor personnel at a kickoff meeting or a training session at the start of each contract year. The environmental awareness training shall include information on tortoise, migratory birds, and other special status species.
4. In general, breeding birds and active nests are most likely to be encountered between February 15 and August 31. If evidence of an active nest is discovered in the area to be sprayed, WAPA staff and all WAPA Contractor personnel shall immediately stop work within 40-feet of the nest and notify DSW's Environmental Manager with the location and nature of the findings. An active nest is defined by the presence of eggs or chicks in the nest.
5. If an herbicide label stipulates a buffer zone protection width for natural resources that differs from other provided specifications, the buffer zone width that offers the greatest protection to natural resources will be applied. Similarly and in addition, if the Pesticide Use Permit(s) that DSW's Vegetation Management Specialist shall obtain prior to herbicide application stipulate a buffer zone for protection of natural resources that differs from other provided specifications, the buffer zone width that offers the greatest protection to natural resources will be applied.

Cultural Resource Concerns

In Arizona, the application of herbicides at substations or other WAPA facilities is an Exempt activity pursuant to Stipulation III.A and Appendix B.D.1 of the 2013 programmatic agreement for routine maintenance and minor construction developed pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In California, WAPA makes a finding of No Potential to Cause Effects per regulation 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1). WAPA has no further obligations under section 106.