



U.S. Department of Energy

Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: WAPA Right-of-Way (ROW) Vegetation Reclamation and Removal Program for the Mead-Perkins 500-kV and Peacock-Liberty 345-kV Transmission Lines.

Program or Field Office: WAPA Desert Southwest Region Office, Phoenix, AZ

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

Proposed Action Description:

WAPA plans to remove vegetation under and around the Mead-Perkins 500-kV and Peacock-Liberty 345-kV high voltage electrical transmission lines to meet electrical safety and reliability requirements. WAPA's proposal consists of clearing away trees, limbs, branches, shrubs, and other foliage to include grinding, mowing, shredding, mulching, and chopping vegetation that could interfere with the Mead-Perkins 500-kV and Peacock-Liberty 345-kV transmission line ROW. Typical equipment used to remove vegetation within the ROW includes wheel based and track mounted vehicles with rubber tires/pads that employ rotary blades to mow at ground level, masticators, crane booms with cutting heads, manual chain saws for steep slopes, and mulcher/shredder machines. Herbicides will be applied to prevent vegetative regrowth.

Vegetation reclamation and removal activities would start just south of where the Mead-Perkins 500-kV transmission line crosses over Interstate Highway 40 east of Kingman, AZ and continue 148 miles within the ROW corridor towards Perkins Substation northwest of Phoenix, AZ. Vegetation reclamation and removal activities for the Peacock-Liberty 345-kV transmission lines would also start where it crosses Interstate Highway 40 and continue 111 miles within the ROW toward Liberty Substation west of Phoenix, AZ.

Please see the continuation sheet for the special conditions that will be part of the vegetation removal program:

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: 2018.10.11 07:58:30 -06'00'

Date Determined: 10/11/2018

WAPA ROW Vegetation Removal Program Categorical Exclusion Continuation Sheet

Table of ROW Vegetation Reclamation

Transmission Line	ID	kV	Total Miles	ROW Width (feet)	Span	Estimated Total (acres)
Mead-Perkins	MED-PES	500	148	200	94/5-124/2 125/1-152/4 154/3-183/3 184/4-218/4 220/1-224/1 229/3-242/1	3,588
Peacock-Liberty	PCK-LIB	345	111	150	94/5-99/2 114/3-119/5 125/1-126/1 131/2-134/3 145/1-159/3 160/3-176/4 196/2-237/3	2,019

Vegetation reclamation and removal activities would start just south of where the Mead-Perkins 500-kV transmission line crosses over U.S. Interstate Highway 40 east of Kingman, AZ and continue 148 miles within the ROW corridor towards Perkins Substation northwest of Phoenix, AZ.

Vegetation reclamation and removal activities for the Peacock-Liberty 345-kV transmission lines would also start where it crosses U.S. Interstate Highway 40 and continue 111 miles within the ROW toward Liberty Substation west of Phoenix, AZ.

All crews working under this ROW vegetation reclamation program shall be qualified and certified tree maintenance specialists subject to OSHA standards. Construction of temporary roads will not be allowed. Existing roads shall be used to access the ROW. Areas that cannot be accessed by existing roads may require planned overland travel routes approved by WAPA.

Environmental awareness training will be given to all crews and employees associated with the vegetation removal program prior to the start of work. This training will detail requirements for compliance with both cultural and biological resources.

WAPA plans to spray post emergent herbicides which will suppress 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 the ROW as necessary.

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.

Biological Concerns

Saguaro cacti and Joshua trees within the ROW under each transmission line shall be avoided unless they pose a direct hazard to transmission line conductors. WAPA environmental staff shall be notified prior to removal of any Saguaro cactus or Joshua tree.

Vegetation in riparian areas within the ROW will not be disturbed or removed unless a tree or shrub poses a direct hazard to the conductor lines.

Avoid impacting birds, and their active nests, covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). If an active bird nest is present, immediately contact DSW's Environmental Office at 602-605-2842.

Cultural Resource Concerns

EFFECT FINDING: The activity is Exempt per Stipulation III.A and Appendix B.15 of the 2013 PA. Crews will only use hand tools within boundaries of unevaluated archaeological sites or known historic properties. Brush/slash will not be piled within site boundaries, and will be hand carried off sites.

GENERAL: Do not remove or alter cultural artifacts or paleontological resources (fossils). Cultural artifacts are of potential scientific or cultural importance and include bones, tools, historic buildings, and features. Paleontological resources can be of scientific importance and include mineralized animals and plants or trace fossils such as footprints. Both cultural and paleontological resources are protected by Federal Regulations during Federal construction projects

UNKNOWN CULTURAL OR PALEONTOLOGICAL SITES: On rare occasions cultural or paleontological sites may be discovered during excavation or other earth-moving activities.

- (1) Reporting: If evidence of a cultural or paleontological site is discovered, immediately notify the Regional Preservation Officer (602-605-2842) and give the location and nature of the findings. Stop all activities within a 50-foot radius of the discovery and do not proceed with work within that radius until directed to do so by the Regional Preservation Officer.
- (2) Care of Evidence: Do not damage or remove artifacts or fossils uncovered during construction.