

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: John Day - Grizzly Transmission Line Overhead Ground Wire Replacement and Moro Test Line Removal

PP&A Project No.: 3,062

Project Manager: Tina Edwards – TEP-TPP-3

Location: Wasco County, Oregon; BPA The Dalles District.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section(s)	County, State	Ownership/Use
John Day - Grizzly	13/5 to 25/1	01N 01S 02S	16E 16E 16E	35 2,3,9,10, 16,21,22,28, 29,31,32 5,8,16,17,20 29	Wasco, OR	Private/Agriculture State/Wildlife Area BLM/Range
Moro Test Line		1S	16E	16	Wasco, OR	Private/Agriculture State/Wildlife Area

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities; B4.10 Removal of electric transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace overhead ground wire on the John Day – Grizzly Line in Wasco County, Oregon. The project will include removing the existing overhead ground wire and replacing it with new cable. The plan is to secure the new cable to the old cable and pull the old cable to a re-spooling area (landing). The new cable will in turn be placed in the same location as the old cable. Equipment required will include line trucks, cable pullers, excavator and dump trucks.

In addition, the abandoned Moro Test Line that consists of six steel lattice structures and transmission line cables will be removed from the retired site. The towers will be cutoff three feet below ground surface. Cable will be removed in a manner similar to the John Day – Grizzly Line as described above except a sock line will be used to keep the cable from dragging on the ground. All excess material will be sent off site for recycling. Equipment required will include line trucks, cable pullers, excavator and dump trucks. Since the test line is within the John Day – Grizzly Line corridor, no land rights will be relinquished.

Minor maintenance of landing and access roads within their existing road and landing prisms may be required to improve access within the transmission line corridor. Access road maintenance may include blading, shaping, rocking and construction of waterbars and drain dips.

The proposed action will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Fred Walasavage

Fred Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *November 7, 2018*

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist

Effects Determination for T&E Species

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 project area will include private, State, and Federal lands. The project area is comprised of canyon lands and ridge tops with some agriculture. Vegetation includes grasses and steppe shrub habitat. Work will be conducted primarily on existing road and landing prisms. Collection of the cable may be required within the transmission corridor as circumstances dictate.

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>BPA archeological approval and Oregon SHPO concurrence on no adverse effect determination on September 27, 2018. In addition, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon and the Bureau of Land management were consulted—no responses received.</p> <p>Inadvertent discovery form should be provided and explained to the road contractor. In the event of an inadvertent discovery, work will immediately cease and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist will be notified.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No prime or unique farmlands will be affected. Any disturbed soils outside of the road prism will be reseeded with a suitable seed mix to stabilize any disturbed vegetative areas.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has requested that no work be conducted from April 1st through May 15th to avoid disturbance of the Big Horn Sheep lambing season. No work will be conducted during this timeframe.</p> <p>No special-status species present according to a project area specific list that was received from the United States Fish and Wildlife Services IPaC – Information, Planning, and Conservation System on January 25, 2018 for the proposed project.</p>		

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



Explanation: None present in the project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed work is in an upland area; maximum depth of disturbance would be about three foot below ground surface.

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



Explanation: No change in land use and no specially designated areas identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: No negative changes in visual quality will result from project activities since the new ground wire will look similar to the one it is replacing. Removal of the Test line will result in a positive visual change.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities will not impact human health or 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: Notification to the private landowners has been ongoing by the BPA Realty Specialist. State Fish and Wildlife (by environmental specialist) was last contacted in June 2018 and Bureau of Land Management (by realty specialist) was notified in January 2017 to describe the scope and solicit comments or concerns. Additional notification will be made to all landowners by the BPA Realty Specialist prior to the commencement of the construction activities.

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

Signed: /s/ Fred Walasavage
Fred Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: November 7, 2018