

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**

**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**

***Project Number: 2019-010***

***Expiration Date: February 28, 2024***

**A. Brief Description of Proposal:** The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), conducts routine communication system activities at existing facilities in seven states (Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming). These activities are part of the day-to-day operation of WAPA's infrastructure.

The following activities occurring **within the existing fenced perimeter of a substation or switchyard, and at existing communication sites** are covered by this Categorical Exclusion (CX):

- (1) Installation, repair, replacement, and removal of aerial communications equipment (microwave radios, antennas, tower lighting systems, microwave dishes, parabolic dishes, and surveillance/security systems) on existing communication towers, structures, and buildings;
- (2) Maintenance or replacement of battery banks;
- (3) Maintenance, servicing, testing, and replacement of communications equipment within communication and control buildings;
- (4) Maintenance of above ground propane tanks;
- (5) Repair or replacement of ground mats, not to exceed current depth of disturbance;
- (6) Replacement or repair of footings for communications equipment, not to exceed current depth of disturbance;
- (7) Maintenance and repair of buildings and structures less than 45 years old;
- (8) Pest management within buildings;
- (9) Maintenance, installation, or removal of a solar power array panel and controller from structures;
- (10) Installation, relocation, or removal of poles, cable trays, and associated equipment, not to exceed current depth of disturbance;
- (11) Clearing vegetation by hand; and
- (12) Grounds maintenance including snowplowing, mowing, and servicing septic tanks, not to exceed current depth of disturbance.

The following activities occurring **within the existing fenced perimeter of a substation or switchyard, at existing communication sites, and within RMR's existing rights-of-way (ROWs) and on documented access roads and easements** are covered by this CX:

- (13) Repair of existing fiber optic cable, where pulling sites or ground disturbance are not required;
- (14) Installation, repair, and replacement of fiber optic splice enclosures, where ground disturbance is not required;
- (15) Parking a fiber optic splice trailer, where the construction of a pad is not necessary;
- (16) Repair, replacement, or removal of existing fences and gates, where no new post holes are required.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**  
**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**  
**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**  
*Project Number: 2019-010*  
*Expiration Date: February 28, 2024*

**B. Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied:** (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

B1.3 Routine maintenance  
B1.7 Electronic equipment  
B1.11 Fencing

B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers  
B4.7 Fiber optic cable

**C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):** (See full text in regulation and attached checklist.)

1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D.

For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements. To fit within a class, the proposal must not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders;
- 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;
- 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;
- Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, State, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to, those listed in paragraph B. (4) (see Attachment A).

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

3) The proposal is not “connected” to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**  
**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**  
**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**  
*Project Number: 2019-010*  
*Expiration Date: February 28, 2024*

**D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:**

- 1) **Activities not listed in Section A, Items 1 through 16, or activities that cannot be implemented while following all Special Stipulations in Section D, are not authorized to be completed under this CX. In these instances, the project proponent must contact RMR's Environment Department to initiate the appropriate environmental review.**
- 2) **This CX is valid until February 28, 2024, or until an updated version is executed by RMR's Environment Department, whichever comes first.**
- 3) This CX does not authorize any ground disturbing activities. All work must be conducted using existing access roads, landings, and pads. RMR's Environment Department must be contacted prior to beginning work if ground disturbance is necessary in conjunction with any of the activities described in Section A, Items 1 through 15.
- 4) If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100-feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, RMR's Archaeologist must be contacted immediately. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by RMR's Archaeologist.
- 5) If any possible human remains are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100-feet of the discovery area must halt immediately and RMR's Archaeologist must be notified immediately by telephone (no later than 24 hours from the time of discovery). A reasonable effort must be made to protect the remains from looting and/or further damage. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by RMR's Archaeologist.
- 6) Any injured or orphaned birds, and all active nest relocations, must be immediately reported to the RMR Avian Protection Leads at 970-593-8803 or 970-278-7119. Any dead birds must be reported to the RMR Avian Protection Leads within twenty-four (24) hours of discovery. Additional documentation, such as photographs and GPS coordinates, may be requested to support RMR's reporting requirements to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 7) To prevent the transport of non-native and invasive plants and animals, including noxious weeds and aquatic nuisance species, work crews must thoroughly wash all vehicles and equipment (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) before entering the action area and working on the project.
- 8) Pesticide applicators must meet all state licensing requirements and must follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines. Applicators must use only EPA-registered pesticides that are approved for the intended use and location, and must follow all applicable label directions.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**  
**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**  
**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**  
*Project Number: 2019-010*  
*Expiration Date: February 28, 2024*

- 9) Lead-based paint, asbestos, PCB, and other environmentally regulated materials requirements must be met.
- 10) Activities involving the use of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other petroleum products must comply with RMR's Spill Response Plan (SRP).

**E. Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.

---

Signature and Date

Brian Little  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Western Area Power Administration

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**

**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**

*Project Number: 2019-010*

*Expiration Date: February 28, 2024*

**ATTACHMENT A**

**Conditions That Are Integral Elements of the Classes  
of Actions in Appendix B That Apply to This Proposal**

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources.		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the 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 § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
<b>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.</b>	NO	YES	Unknown
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(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.	X		
(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.	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally	X		

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**

**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**

*Project Number: 2019-010*

*Expiration Date: February 28, 2024*

<p>sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:</p>			
<p>(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;</p>	X		
<p>(ii) Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally-proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);</p>	X		
<p>(iii) Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);</p>	X		
<p>(iv) Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;</p>	X		
<p>(v) Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor;</p>	X		

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Communication System Activities**

**Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**

***Project Number: 2019-010***

***Expiration Date: February 28, 2024***

(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests; or	X		
(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 of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.	X		