

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: AT&T Mount Blyn/Millers Peninsula Wireless Upgrades

Project Manager: Chuck Wedick TELP-TPP-3

Location: Jefferson County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers.

Description of the Proposed Action: AT&T proposes to upgrade their wireless communications infrastructure that is currently located on BPA's existing Mt. Blyn communications tower. AT&T would replace four existing microwave antennas and install two new microwave antennas. AT&T would also replace nine existing wireless antennas and install three new wireless antennas. Additional power and coaxial cables would be installed from the control house up the tower to the new antennas.

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, Jul. 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/ Douglas F. Corkran

Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: November 21, 2019

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

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Project Site Description

The proposed project is located on Mt. Blyn which sits approximately 2100 feet above sea level. The top of the mountain is mostly bare of trees and contains a number of existing communications sites, including 11 communications towers of various heights. The mountain top is surrounded by second growth fir forest that was logged and replanted approximately 40 years ago.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place. BPA's cultural resources department and historian reviewed the project and determined that the proposed project would have no potential to affect cultural or historic resources.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore no soil disturbance would occur. No impact to geology and soils is expected.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore no disturbance to plants would occur. No impact to plants is expected		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore no disturbance to ground-dwelling wildlife would occur. Noise disturbance during construction may briefly affect nearby wildlife however; ambient noise and disturbances are high in the area due to operations and maintenance activities at the other radio sites, so many wildlife species are habituated to high levels of disturbance. There is no habitat suitable for marbled murrelets in or near the project area, so the project would have no effect on them. Overall, no impacts to wildlife are expected.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project is located on a mountain top, with no water or floodplains nearby. The proposed project would have no effect on water bodies, floodplains or fish.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no wetlands near the proposed project and no ground-disturbing work would occur, therefore; no impacts to wetlands are expected.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: There is no groundwater at the top of Mt. Blyn and no ground-disturbing work would take place, therefore no impact to groundwater or aquifers is expected

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



Explanation: Mt. Blyn is heavily used for communications sites and is not a specially-designated area. The proposed project would continue this use and would not cause changes or impacts to land use or specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Most of the existing AT&T antennas would be replaced with antennas of similar appearance. Some new antennas would be placed on the tower, but would not appreciably change the appearance of the tower. There are no sensitive viewer areas (e.g. residences) that would be affected by changes in visual appearance. No impacts to visual quality are expected.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Some minor emissions would occur from the equipment and vehicles used to remove and install the antennas and cables during construction, but these would not appreciably affect air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some minor noise would be generated by the equipment and vehicles used to remove and install the antennas and cables during construction. No additional noise would be generated by operation of the equipment. No impacts from noise are expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health or safety. No impacts to human health and safety are expected.

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 site is owned by BPA, and no landowner notification is necessary.

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

Signed: /s/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F. Corkran ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: November 21, 2019