

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell District SPAR arm and Hardware Replacement for Fire Mitigation

PP&A No.: 4433

Project Manager: Mike Stolfus – TFKF-KALISPELL

Location: Deer Lodge, Granite, Lake, Missoula, Powell, Sanders, and Silver Bow counties, MT

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 – Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace the SPAR arm and/or replace/reinforce hardware on SPAR arms at transmission poles for fire mitigation on the Hot Springs- Rattlesnake No. 1, Rattlesnake- Garrison No. 1, Garrison- Anaconda No. 1, and Anaconda- Silver Bow No. 1. Hot Springs to Silver Bow transmission lines, which are located in Deer Lodge, Granite, Lake, Missoula, Powell, Sanders, and Silver Bow Counties, Montana. Replacement would be in kind and would include landing and access road improvements at specified locations. About 60 landings would be improved by grading and stabilizing with the addition of rock and access road improvements would include blading and shaping of roadways to include capping with rock. To replace the SPAR arms, linemen would access towers and replace SPAR arms as needed and reinforce or replace the failing hardware to secure the arms to the transmission line. The project is proposed to be conducted during Spring to Fall 2020.

Typical equipment utilized would be bucket trucks, excavators, and line trucks.

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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Office

Date: May 15, 2020

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 in western Montana and includes work along the following transmission lines: Hot Springs — Rattlesnake No. 1, Rattlesnake — Garrison No. 1, Garrison — Anaconda No. 1, and Anaconda — Silver Bow No. 1. The project area is confined to the areas immediately adjacent to structures. The project is located in western Montana with areas predominantly located within the Flathead Indian Reservation and private property. The land use in the surrounding areas are forested, foothills, valley bottom, rangeland, wetland, and industrial property that are mostly grassy with some shubby vegetation and within a steep forested setting containing the following habitat types: Montana Forest, Intermountain Grassland, Riparian, Scrub / Shrub Grassland, and Forested Scree.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A Section 106 review for the proposed emergency work has not been conducted. BPA archaeologists have coordinated with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe's (CSKT) Preservation Staff to facilitate cultural monitoring during the course of the proposed emergency work. Cultural monitoring is a requirement for any undertaking located on the Flathead Indian Reservation. As such, BPA would have a CSKT Preservation Staff monitor during the proposed emergency work both on and off reservation lands. BPA's Transmission Field Services staff will be coordinating the CSKT cultural monitors.</p> <p>If inadvertent discoveries are encountered during implementation, the work shall be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by the appropriate consulting parties. BPA's Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resource Procedures along with the Inadvertent Discovery Requirements for the CSKT Flathead Reservation should be followed. BPA's ECC staff have provided these procedure documents to the Transmission Field Services staff and have requested they have this documentation onsite during this work.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Localized soil disturbance would occur during, landing improvements and access road maintenance activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.</p>		

3. **Plants** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation: No known Federal/state special-status plants are present in the project area. Vegetation would be crushed and left in place, rather than bladed, where possible. Any disturbed areas outside the road prism would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to vegetation.

- Drive on existing access roads.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Crush vegetation in place of removal.

4. **Wildlife** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation: In general, the project would have minimal impacts to local wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to ESA-listed species or state sensitive species categorized as “Critically Imperiled” or “Imperiled”.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitat.

- Drive on existing access roads.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Crush vegetation in place of removal.

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

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. There are no fish in the vicinity of the project area. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No ground disturbing activities are anticipated in wetlands or other waterbodies that occur along the project. Erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sedimentation.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed and excavation would not extend to a depth that would intersect ground water.

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

Explanation: No specially designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right of ways. Replacement of SPAR Arms and associated components would be in-kind and replaced in the same location

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times, maintain reliable power in the region, and mitigate fire concerns.

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: Although portions of the project area are located in the Anaconda Co. Smelter Superfund Site and the Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area Superfund Site, ground disturbance in these areas would be minimal. Soil would not be removed from the site.

- 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: BPA Realty personnel would perform landowner notifications prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities would be addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz, EPR-Bell-1
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: May 15, 2020