

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Reedsport-Fairview No. 1 Structures 22/5 & 24/2 Priority Wood Pole Replacement

PP&A No.: 4927

Project Manager: Jeffery Hurt - TEPL-CSB-2

Location: Coos County, Oregon

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 two wood pole structures (22/5 and 24/2) on the Reedsport-Fairview No. 1 transmission line in the North Bend TLM District. Reedsport-Fairview No. 1 structures, 22/5 and 24/2, would need to be replaced as soon as possible as they pose a threat due to woodpecker damage. Failure of the poles poses a substantial risk in terms of fire, public safety, and system reliability. The damaged poles would be replaced in-kind using the same associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.). Replacement poles would be placed in existing holes following removal of current pole structures, and may be re-augured to assure proper depth placement.

Structure 22/5 is located approximately 500 feet from a two track access road from a private driveway, the area would be graded, but not graveled. Approximately 300 feet of the private driveway may need to be restored after completion of the project due to BPA equipment use. Existing landings are approximately 50 feet by 70feet, improvements to the landings would consist of minimal cut/fill (210 cubic yards), blading and rocking. In addition, one 30-inch-diameter Douglas fir would be side limbed to a height of 14 feet on the north-east side of the tree trunk to allow unrestricted passage of TLM equipment.

The landings at 24/1 would be improved with minimal blading prior to being rocked. The upper landing at is currently approximately 5,000 square feet and the lower landing is approximately 1,200 square feet. Approximately 0.28 miles of access road would be bladed and rocked as part of the improvements. The graveled access road from structure 24/1 is cut into the steep slope, about 3,000 cubic yards of the steep slope would be cut and used as fill to straighten out the access road and widen the landing at structure 24/2 to an area of approximately 7,000 square feet. In total, approximately 15 Douglas firs ranging from 14 inch to 18inches in diameter would be removed from this area.

The proposed pole replacement would be done using conventional utility line and construction equipment and techniques.

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/ Anthony Gibson
Anthony Gibson
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange Date: July 7, 2023
NEPA Compliance Officer

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.

Proposed Action: Reedsport-Fairview No. 1 Structures 22/5 & 24/2 Priority Wood Pole Replacement

Project Site Description

Structures 22/5 and 24/2 on the Reedsport-Fairview No. 1 transmission line are located on private lands in Coos County, Oregon. Structure 22/5 is a two pole wood structure located at the top of a moderately-sloped grassy pasture. Previous disturbances include surface grading around pole, and continued agricultural use of the field. Structure 24/2 is a two pole wood structure located on a slope high above a steeply-sloped drainage.

See Table 1 below for Township, Range, Section Number, and County information.

Table 1. Township, Range, Section Number, and County Information

Transmission Line	TLM District	Structure	Township, Range, Section	OR Counties
Reedsport-Fairview No. 1	North Bend	22/5	T25S, R12W, SEC17	Coos
	North Bend	24/2	T25S, R12W, SEC20	Coos

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with a no effect to historic resources determination to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office on May 25, 2023. The Coquille Indian Tribe provided concurrence with the determination via an email dated June 1, 2023. No additional response was received within 30 days.

In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacement and access road and landing improvements. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road and transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to wildlife and habitat associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence is anticipated. Work would occur during daylight hours and will be limited to the immediate project area. The surrounding land provides ample habitat and cover for any wildlife disturbed by the project's activities. BPA obtained an official species list on June 21, 2023, from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to analyze the proposed project's impacts to wildlife species protected under the ESA. The marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, and western snowy plover are listed as threatened in the greater project location; however, the project area does not contain suitable habitat for these species, and BPA has determined that the project would have "No Effect" on marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, and western snowy plover.

No documented State of Oregon special-status species or habitats are present in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies would be impacted and standard erosion control measures would be used as needed. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed fish species.

Notes: Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located in vehicles used for this project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers as the ground disturbance would not be deep enough to penetrate groundwater.

Notes: Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located in vehicles used for this project.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use. The project is not located in any specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way and access road prisms. Replacement of the wood pole and associated components would be in kind and replaced in the same location; therefore, there would not be a change to the visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur temporarily during this project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary noise from heavy equipment and associated project activities is anticipated. Construction activity would occur during daylight hours to minimize impacts to people and wildlife. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Failure of the poles poses a substantial risk in terms of fire, public safety, and system reliability. The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce fire danger, outage times, and maintain reliable power in the region. All BPA and BPA-contractor work supporting the project would proceed following established safety practices and guidelines.

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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA transmission line maintenance foreman, access road engineers, environmental representatives, and realty representatives have discussed proposed project activities with the landowners, and would continue to coordinate activities with the landowners through construction and into post-construction revegetation monitoring.

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

Signed: /s/ Anthony Gibson Date: July 7, 2023
Anthony Gibson – EPI-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)