

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Spar Canyon Substation Asset Acquisition

**Project No.:** PO4524

**Project Manager:** Jay Largo, TPC-TPP-4

**Location:** Custer County, Idaho

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.24 Property Transfer

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to acquire equipment at Salmon Creek Electric Cooperative's (SREC) Spar Canyon Substation.

BPA owns the majority of equipment inside the Spar Canyon Substation. In the proposed asset acquisition, BPA would acquire the small amount of remaining tap equipment interconnecting SREC's Thompson Creek Mine transmission line to the substation. Additionally, the substation would become BPA-only access and BPA would be solely responsible for future operation and maintenance of the substation.

No construction or facility operational changes are proposed. The asset acquisition would simplify operations and maintenance of the substation.

**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.

Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
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: Spar Canyon Asset Acquisition

### Project Site Description

The Spar Canyon Substation is located on BLM-managed land in central Idaho (T11N, R21E, Section 7). The existing substation is approximately 12.8 acres and interconnects with BPA's Spar Canyon-Round Valley No. 1 115-kV and Lost River-Spar Canyon No 1 230-kV transmission lines, and SREC's Thompson Creek Mine 230-kV transmission line. The substation, situated in high elevation shrub-scrub rangeland, has no surface water or wetlands occurring within the general vicinity.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

#### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), BPA has determined this undertaking is the type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties assuming such historic properties were present.

#### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset acquisition. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and geology or soils would not be affected by the change in asset ownership.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset acquisition. No Federal/state special-status plant species occur within the substation boundary. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and plants would not be affected by the change in asset ownership.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No noise or vegetation disturbing work is associated with the proposed asset acquisition and land use permit transfer. No Federal/state special-status wildlife species occur within the substation boundary. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and wildlife would not be affected by the change in asset ownership.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains occur within the general vicinity of the substation.

**6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands occur within the general vicinity of the substation.

**7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset acquisition. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and groundwater or aquifers would not be affected by the change in asset ownership.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Use of the substation would remain the same. BPA would have sole access and take over all operations and maintenance for Spar Canyon Substation.

**9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing conditions would remain unchanged. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and visual quality would not be affected by the change in asset ownership.

**10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No dust or pollution would be released as part of the asset acquisition. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and air quality would not be affected by the change in asset ownership.

**11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No noise would be produced as part of the asset acquisition. Equipment would continue to operate as it does currently and no new noise would be caused by the change in asset ownership.

**12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new health or safety risks would be caused by the asset acquisition. BPA performed a site assessment to identify any hazardous materials associated with the asset

acquisition that could pose a liability. No evidence of hazardous materials was found. Equipment would continue to operate as it does currently after the asset acquisition.

### **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 Realty would continue coordination with BLM and SREC to transfer the land permit to BPA's name.

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

Signed:

Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist