

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Maupin-Tygh Valley Transmission Line Rebuild

Project No. (if applicable): 2789

Project Manager: Richard Heredia, TEP-TPP-1

Location: BPA The Dalles District in Wasco County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.10, Removal of electric transmission facilities; and B4.12, Construction of powerlines

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to rebuild the Maupin-Tygh Valley #1 transmission line to current design standards using the same general alignment. The project activities would be conducted along the 3.20-mile, 69-kilovolt BPA Maupin-Tygh Valley #1 transmission line, and associated access roads, between Maupin Substation and Tygh Valley Substation. The project would include replacing 24 two- and three-pole wood structures, guy anchors, switches, buried ground wire (counterpoise), insulators and conductor. Not all new structures would be installed in the same locations as the old structures. Three new structures would be added near Tygh Valley Substation. Four existing wood pole structures that suspend the existing conductor and airway markers over the Deschutes River would be replaced with two steel lattice structures. Each of the steel lattice structures would require four excavations for grillage footing installation. Controlled blasting may be necessary at some sites in order to excavate to the depth required to embed the wood poles and/or grillage footings. Some earthwork and the addition of crushed rock may be necessary at the pole replacement and steel structure sites to provide a stable base for the equipment. Railroads, public roads, and overhead electrical distribution crossings may require the installation of temporary guard structures for public safety and infrastructure protection. All rebuild activities described above would be contained within 100 feet on either side of the centerline of the existing and/or new alignments.

Approximately six miles of existing access roads would also be rebuilt or improved to allow access to the transmission line corridor. Short segments of new access roads, totaling approximately 900 feet, would also be built. The majority of access road work would require sub-surface disturbances up to 16 feet in width, and minor re-alignments of existing access roads may be necessary.

Material storage and staging areas would be set up near the terminal substations. Due to this line's configuration, four or five mobile diesel generators (1000- and 2000-kilowatt) would be needed to supply the customer's load during the construction window. These generators would be temporarily located at Tygh Valley Substation and Wamic Substation (approximately 9 miles to the East of Tygh Valley Substation).

The transmission line crosses through agricultural, grazing, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, tribal, and United States Bureau of Land Management lands, including the Deschutes Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

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, July 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/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 28, 2015

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:

Project Site Description

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"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> BPA proposes to avoid two identified historical properties, thus it was determined that there will be no effect to historic properties for this project. The Oregon SHPO concurred with this determination on August 25, 2014. | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. Excess material would be contoured to match surrounding terrain, track-walked, seeded and mulched. | | |
| 3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> Federal/state special-status plant species are not known to occur in the project area. | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> Federal/state special-status wildlife species are not known to occur in the project area. | | |
| 5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> There are no water resources in the vicinity of the work sites. The project area crosses the Deschutes River which is known habitat, and designated critical habitat, for steelhead and bull trout, and essential fish habitat for Chinook salmon. Project activities are not planned within the Deschutes River Canyon and would not affect the water quality or habitat conditions of the Deschutes River or other nearby surface waters. | | |
| 6. Wetlands | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> All work is in upland areas. There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the work sites. | | |

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs.

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



Explanation: Deschutes Wild and Scenic River Corridor, administered by the BLM. The project spans BLM property which includes the Deschutes River Wild and Scenic River corridor. No new structures would be located on BLM property.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: As viewed from the Deschutes Wild and Scenic River corridor, the two new steel structures would have slightly more visual weight but would occupy a smaller footprint than the existing four wood pole structures. The steel that would be used to construct the towers would be galvanized and the finish would dull slightly over the first few seasons. From the vantage point of the river, the final color should blend into various sky conditions better than a darker finish. The conductors would also have a dull (non-specular) finish. Long term changes to the existing appearance of the transmission line crossing are expected to be low.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation will be temporary and negligible. Generators would operate as necessary to meet the electrical load during the construction window, which is expected to last less than one month. Wasco County is not a nonattainment area for air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise will be localized and occur during daylight hours. There are no houses or other structures in the vicinity of the rebuild project. Generators would operate as necessary to meet the electrical load during the construction window, which is expected to last less than one month. Each generator would produce approximately 68-72 decibels at a 20-foot distance. The area near Wamic Substation is very sparsely populated.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Proposed action in existing ROW corridor will not impact human health or safety. Stringing the conductor across the Deschutes River is expected to take place after Labor Day, thus reducing the potential to impact recreational users of the river.

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: BPA notified landowners along the corridor, and obtained the proper permissions prior to entering properties. Coordination with landowners would continue through the completion of the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn, KEPR-4

Date: January 28, 2015