

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY15 Wood Pole Replacement – Kalispell District

Project No. (if applicable):

Project Manager: Gary Beck

Location: Montana (Counties: Deer Lodge, Powell, Granite, Flathead and Lincoln). See attachment for project specific transmission lines and structure locations.

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to replace a total of twelve deteriorating wood-pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along five different transmission lines in Montana. Replacement will be in kind and will utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger will be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement.

Access road maintenance will be limited to mowing, blading, compacting, shaping, and surfacing existing access road segments. Reconstruction of existing water bars, fords, culverts, and drainage ditches may also occur. All access road maintenance will be limited to the existing road cut and prism.

The proposed action will allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which will help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Phil Smith for

Michael A. Rosales

Physical Scientist - Environment

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 21, 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.

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Project Site Description

All wood pole replacement projects are located within existing transmission line right of ways, in rural, non-developed areas and/or in rural, agricultural areas.

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> <ul style="list-style-type: none">According to the scope of the proposed work, the activity is not a type that would result in changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such historic properties are located in the area of potential effects. Replacement wood poles will be placed in the existing locations. New landing construction is not planned or anticipated. Crews and equipment are to use existing access roads to and from each work site. In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area will be secured and the SHPO and the environmental project lead must be notified.According to the scope of the proposed work, the activity is not a type that would result in changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such historic properties are located in the area of potential effects. The proposed action is considered to be routine access road maintenance necessary to preserve existing infrastructure, maintain roadway safety, and manage storm water run-off and will be limited to maintenance on an existing access road cut and prism and structure footprints in the cleared transmission line ROW. Inadvertent discovery form should be provided and explained to the road contractor. In the event of an inadvertent discovery, work will immediately cease and the SHPO and BPA archaeologist will be notified.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Standard construction erosion control measures will be utilized as necessary.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No federal/special status plants present. Disturbed areas will be reseeded as necessary.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No federal/state special status species present.		

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



Explanation: No water bodies are present at project locations.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present except along the Columbia Falls-Kalispell No. 1 Transmission Line at structures 10/3, 11/5 and 11/6. These structures will be accessed once ground is dry or with the installation of wetland matting.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed.

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



Explanation: No change in land use. No specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



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

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emission from construction activity.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



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

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 Realty will make the proper landowner notifications.

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

Signed: /s/ Phil Smith for
Michael A. Rosales, KEPR-Bell-1
Physical Scientist - Environment

Date: April 21, 2015