

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: June 17, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Glenn Russell
Project Manager –TPCV-TPP-4

Proposed Action: Hat Rock Switching Station Replacement Project

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Location: Umatilla County, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund PacifiCorp's rebuild of BPA's Hat Rock Tap Switching Station, which is located within PacifiCorp's McNary-Wallula 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line right-of-way (ROW). Rebuilding the switching station would include the replacement of sectionalizing switches, the grounding grid, and all signage. The approximately 0.5-acre yard would be leveled and ditches would be excavated for the installation of the new grounding grid. Eight 6-inch-diameter, 40-foot-deep grounding wells would be drilled at the perimeter of the grounding grid. Two existing fences would be removed and a single new fence would be installed to enclose the entire facility. The approximately 0.5-mile-long access road leading to the switching station would be bladed in areas requiring improvements. No disturbance outside of the existing road prism would be required for the road improvements.

Findings:

The Project footprint is largely void of vegetation and has been previously disturbed through ROW and access road construction, operation, and maintenance. Surrounding lands contain shrub-steppe habitat with vegetation consisting of sagebrush, bitterbrush, cheatgrass, and other scrub vegetation. The general area is relatively flat, though the switching station is located on a slight slope.

The Project disturbance area would be located approximately 0.6 mile from the Columbia River. Soils underlying the Project area are not hydric and no wetlands or waterbodies are mapped. Field reconnaissance confirmed that no wetlands or waterbodies are present within or near the Project work areas.

As the Project would not be located near any waterbodies, the Project would have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species listed as potentially occurring in Umatilla County. A biological survey for Washington ground squirrel (*Urocitellus washingtoni*), a federal candidate species, did not identify any individuals in the Project area.

On March 11, 2013, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). The Oregon SHPO concurred with BPA's Area of Potential Effect (APE) in their letter dated March 19, 2013. A qualified archaeologist conducted a cultural resource survey within the APE on April 10, 2013. The

subsequent cultural resource report determined that the proposed Project would have no adverse effect to historic properties. BPA sought concurrence from the consulted parties on May 2, 2013. Oregon SHPO concurred with BPA's determination in their letter dated June 12, 2013. No response from the CTUIR was received during the consultation period.

BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

Based on the provisions identified on the attachment, this proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

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

Date: *June 17, 2013*

ecc:
Thomas Murphy, PacifiCorp, Thomas.Murphy@PacifiCorp.com

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Hat Rock Switch Replacement

Work Order #: 00329862

This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

Environmental Resources	No Potential for Significance	No Potential, with Conditions (describe)
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>In the event any archaeological or historical material is encountered during Project activities, the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop work in the vicinity and notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA Project staff, interested Tribes, Oregon SHPO, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies as soon as possible. • Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. • Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access. 		
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None present in project area.		
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None present in project area.		
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None present in project area		
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None present in project area		
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None present in project area		
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):
 Effects Determination for Threatened and Endangered Species
 Section 106 consultation letters

Signed: /s/ Katey Grange

Date: June 17, 2013