

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Equipment Upgrades at Maloney Ridge Radio Station

**Project Manager:** Adelle Harris—TSES-TPP-2

**Location:** King County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to allow T-Mobile to upgrade their antennas at the Maloney Ridge Radio Station. The upgrades would consist of the removal of two antennas, two antenna frames (mounting brackets), and two tower-mounted antennas (TMA) from the existing 120-foot-tall lattice tower. The removed elements would be replaced with three new antennas, two new antenna mounts, three remote radio heads (RRH), and one 15-foot-long jumper. A new coaxial cable would be installed from the new antennas to connect to the indoor equipment. Two remote radio units from the equipment building would be relocated to the new antenna mounts on the tower.

**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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ David K. Kennedy

David K. Kennedy  
Executive Manager Environmental Planning & Analysis

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Date: September 9, 2019

Katey Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment: 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:** Equipment Upgrades at Maloney Ridge Radio Station

---

## Project Site Description

The project area is on Maloney Ridge in the Snoqualmie National Forest in King County, Washington, approximately one mile southeast of the town of Skykomish. The site is developed with two radio towers and several equipment buildings. The surrounding area is forested. The tower is in Section 36, Township 26 North, Range 11 East.

The nearest waterbody is Maloney Creek, located 0.5 miles west of the project location. There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the site. The site is in a graveled and fenced lease area. The surrounding forest is dominated by Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), with noble firs (*Abies procera*) and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) interspersed.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA cultural staff have reviewed the proposed project and determined that there is no potential to cause effects to historical or cultural resources because there would be no ground disturbance associated with the project and the radio tower is not considered a historic resource.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project would not involve any ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impact to geology and soils.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project location is in a graveled, fenced area; therefore, there would be no impacts to plants.		

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

Explanation: The project is occurring in an area designated as critical habitat for marbled murrelets and Northern spotted owls. Additionally, there are occurrence records within 3.5 miles for marbled murrelet and 1.75 miles for Northern spotted owl. An informal consultation with US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) was initiated and it was determined that the project would have no effect on designated critical habitat and the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect either species, as long as the following conditions are followed:

- Work would occur between September 5 and February 28.
- For work occurring between September 5 to September 23, work would start two hours after official sunrise and end two hours prior to official sunset.

On August 22, 2019, USFWS sent a concurrence letter, confirming that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect marbled murrelets or Northern spotted owl.

There are no other federal or state special-status wildlife species or habitats present that would be impacted by the project.

Due to the limited scope of the project and timing of construction activities, the project is unlikely to affect any non-listed wildlife species.

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

Explanation: The proposed project would not involve any ground disturbance. Additionally, there are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish present at, or near, the project location; therefore, there would be no impacts.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: The proposed project would not involve ground disturbance. Additionally, there are no wetlands present at, or near, the project location; therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The proposed project would not involve ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impacts to groundwater or aquifers.

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

Explanation: The project would not change the land use at the location and there are no specially-designated areas in the vicinity; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The visual quality would not change at the site.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction. There would be no changes to air quality after construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or safety.

### **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: The underlying land is owned by US Forest Service (USFS); however, USFS has designated the Maloney Ridge Users Association (MRUA), a consortium of tower stakeholders, to review and coordinate minor activities, such as operations/maintenance and antenna upgrades at the site. The MRUA has agreed to allow the T-Mobile upgrades to occur.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Belanger, ECT-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC