

# memorandum

DATE: October 26, 2010

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEPR-Bell-1

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Todd Wehner  
Project Manager – TELP-TPP-3

Michael Stolfus  
Lineman Foreman III – TFKF-Kalispell

**Proposed Action:** Conduct access road maintenance, landing construction and structure maintenance from mile 5 through mile 15 of the Taft-Hot Springs #1 500-kV transmission line right-of-way (ROW).

**PP&A Project No:** 1775

**Work Order No.:** 00264402

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

- B1.13 Construction, acquisition, and relocation of onsite pathways and short onsite access roads and railroads.
- B1.3 Routine maintenance activities...for structures, rights of way, infrastructures such as roads, equipment...routine maintenance activities, corrective....are required to maintain...infrastructures...in a condition suitable for a facility to be used for its designed purpose.

**Location:** Activity will take place in northwestern Montana near the city of Thompson Falls. Specific project locations are listed in the table below:

Structure	Township	Range	Section	County
5/2, 6/1	20N	31W	08	Sanders
6/5	20N	31W	04	
7/3, 7/6	21N	31W	34	
8/1, 8/2, 8/3	21N	31W	35	
9/1	21N	31W	26	
10/2	21N	30W	30	
11/1	21N	30W	19	
11/4	21N	30W	20	
12/3	21N	30W	21	
13/5	21N	30W	15	
14/1	21N	30W	22	
15/1	21N	30W	23	

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Most maintenance activities will take place within the existing transmission line ROW easement and include upgrading existing roads, constructing equipment landings and performing maintenance on structures at locations identified in the table above and as described in detail below:

- Access road maintenance will involve clearing vegetation from existing road surfaces, grading and shaping existing road surfaces and turnouts, cleaning existing ditches and culverts, and installing water bars and drain dips where needed. All road maintenance will take place within the existing road prism and the existing road easement width of 20 feet.
- Landing construction will be limited to an area approximately 100 feet ahead on line and 100 feet back on line of each structure and from center line, approximately 50 feet on each side of the structures identified in the table above.
- Steel tower maintenance will involve replacement of steel tower components (insulators, hardware, etc).

Erosion control measures for this project will include reseeding with a native seed mix to stabilize any disturbed vegetative areas and utilizing erosion control devices (i.e. silt fencing, straw bales, diversion dams, etc) to minimize sedimentation of water resources during project activities.

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

### **Analysis:**

#### **ESA Listed Species and Habitat**

In response to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA has prepared an Effects Determination for the proposed project. A determination of "No Effect" was made for all ESA listed species, designated critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat.

#### **Cultural Resources**

On September 17, 2010, Section 106 consultation was initiated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. On September 23, 2010, SHPO responded that there was a low likelihood that cultural properties would be impacted and recommended that a cultural resource inventory was unwarranted at this time. On October 15, 2010, the THPO responded that the project could proceed as planned.

**Findings:** BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B, of Subpart D, of the Department of Energy (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 Fed. Reg. 1512.2, April 24, 1992). 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, 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 un-permitted releases; or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

With the actions 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/ Philip W. Smith, for:

Michael A. Rosales

Physical Scientist - Environment

Concur: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 26, 2010

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

## Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Taft-Hot Springs mile 5 to mile 15

PP&A Project No.: 1775

Prepared by: M. Rosales Routing: KEPR-Bell-1 Date: 10/19/2010

This project has been found to **not** adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect with conditions
1. Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On September 23, 2010, the SHPO responded that a cultural resource survey was unwarranted at this time.</li> <li>▪ On October 15, 2010, the THPO responded that the project could proceed as planned.</li> <li>▪ 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.</li> </ul>		
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bull trout may inhabit streams that are within ½ mile of the transmission line. Project activities are not planned near water resources containing listed fish species therefore there will be “No Effect” to this listed species or critical/essential fish habitat. .		
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water resources (streams, ponds, wetlands) are present within ½ mile of the project area. For this project, road repairs are not expected to affect these water resources but erosion control devices will be installed as needed to prevent sedimentation of these resources.		
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>