

memorandum

DATE: July 01, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Charla Burke
Project Manager – TEP-TPP-1

Proposed Action: Kalispell Substation Shunt Capacitor Addition

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Location: Flathead County, Montana

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to expand the substation yard, install new equipment, and construct a new control house within BPA's existing 115-kilovolt (kV) Kalispell Substation in Flathead County, Montana. Existing low voltage conditions at Kalispell Substation could compromise system reliability in the event of a single line loss, which violates BPA steady-state voltage requirements and National Energy Safety Code (NESC) planning criteria standards. Since rack space within the existing control house is at capacity and the building cannot be expanded, a new control house would be constructed to support the operation and maintenance of the new equipment. The installation of new equipment would provide the required voltage support to ensure system reliability and comply with BPA requirements and NESC standards.

In order to complete the project, BPA would expand the southeastern corner of Kalispell Substation yard by approximately 0.5 acre within BPA fee-owned property. Structure 1/1 of BPA's existing Kalispell-Kerr No.1 115-kV line would be relocated approximately 130 feet south on line within BPA's existing right-of-way (ROW), and reterminated from Bay 6 to new Bay 8. BPA would relocate an existing capacitor bank to the expansion area and install new steel support, bus, conduit, and footings. BPA would remove an existing 1200 Ampere (A) 20 thousand Ampere (KA) circuit switcher, replace it with a new 115-kV 2000A 40KA power circuit breaker, and install the circuit switcher on the relocated capacitor bank. BPA would install two new fuseless capacitor banks in the expansion area with associated switching and protective equipment including: two new 115-kV 1200A 20KA circuit switchers, three new 1600A disconnects, three new 500A current limiting reactors, three new 96-kV surge arresters, new relays, steel support, bus, conduit, footings, and overhead grounding wire.

BPA would additionally remove its existing maintenance building and construct a new control house in the northern half of the maintenance building's footprint. An existing radio tower would be relocated to the north side of the new control house, and its height increased to clear substation equipment and bus in the beam path. BPA would decommission a septic tank and two existing wells, and drill a new well on the northeast corner of the site. The southern half of the maintenance building's footprint would be resurfaced with asphalt for additional vehicle parking and circulation.

Control cables and wiring would be installed in underground conduits to connect the new control house, relocated capacitor bank, and new capacitor banks to the existing substation equipment. To install the conduit, trenches would be excavated from the new control house and expansion area to connect with existing underground conduit along a line of breakers on the southeast side of the substation. The perimeter fence would be extended to enclose the expansion area and new control house. All disturbed areas within the substation yard would be graded and rocked.

The proposed project would permanently disturb approximately 0.5 acre to accommodate the substation expansion and new equipment, and temporarily disturb up to 5.4 acres for construction activities and equipment storage. Disturbance would result from trenching, grading, the removal of organics/soil/debris, and the addition of fill material. The project site would be accessed through an existing entrance from State Highway 35 located at the north side of the substation.

Resource Review: BPA reviewed potential impacts to vegetation, wetlands and floodplains, water, federally listed species and critical habitat, and cultural resources by the proposed project.

Existing Environment. The project site is located within Flathead County, MT, on existing BPA fee-owned property occupied by BPA's Kalispell Substation, and a portion of BPA fee-owned ROW along the BPA Kalispell - Kerr transmission line corridor. The Project lies along State Route 35 approximately 1 mile west of the Flathead River at elevations between 2880 feet and 2920 feet, and is within the Flathead Lake Watershed. The site consists of control houses, maintenance and equipment sheds, transmission lines and towers, substation equipment, and graveled and paved areas for vehicle circulation and equipment storage. Vegetated areas of the proposed project site are previously disturbed with evidence of fill and grading. The surrounding landscape consists of farmland and rural residences, and contains upland, wetland, and riparian areas.

Vegetation. The project would remove existing vegetation comprised of non-native grasses, weeds, and agricultural crops. Disturbed areas would be replanted with a combination of native woody and herbaceous species. No sensitive or federally-listed plant species would be affected.

Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains. Shaw's Slough, an associated palustrine emergent wetland complex, and a 100-year floodplain are located approximately 300 feet north of the project site. There are no perennial or intermittent streams within the project site. Best management practices (BMPs) would be utilized to prevent erosion and runoff from construction activities from entering the wetlands and other water resources.

Federally Listed Wildlife Species and Critical Habitat. The proposed project will have no effect on these species or their critical habitat located in Flathead County because suitable habitat does not exist within the project area.

Cultural Resources. On December 11, 2012, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Based on background research and a cultural resource survey, BPA determined the proposed project would have no effect on cultural resources or historic properties. The Montana SHPO concurred with BPA's determination in a letter dated June 20, 2013.

Findings: 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/ Zachary R. Gustafson
Zachary R. Gustafson
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

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

Date: *July 1, 2013*

Attachments:
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions
Provisions

PROVISIONS

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

Natural Resources

- Implement erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) immediately after clearing and prior to ground disturbing activities to prevent erosion and runoff.
- Reseed disturbed areas with regionally appropriate native woody and herbaceous species.
- Decommission existing wells per the current Administrative Rules of the State of Montana and Board of Water Well Contractors requirements and standards.
- Construct new well in compliance with current Administrative Rules of the State of Montana, Board of Water Well Constructors requirements and standards, and Montana Department of Environmental Quality standards and specifications.

Cultural Resources

In the event any archaeological or historical material is encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:

- Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Montana SHPO, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies.
- 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.

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Kalispell Substation Shunt Capacitor Addition

Work Order #: 318929

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.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands Implement erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) that are protective of wetlands and water resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water Groundwater. Decommission wells and septic tank, and construct new well in compliance with all applicable state and local rules, requirements, standards, and specifications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: /s/ Zachary Gustafson

Date: July 1, 2013