

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2015 Wood Pole Replacement and Access Road Maintenance within Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA) Idaho Falls District

Project No. (if applicable): 3158

Project Manager: Mark Hadley, Line Foreman III – TFIF-Idaho Falls

Location: Bonneville, Teton, and Freemont Counties Idaho; Gallatin County, Montana.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Drummond-Macks Inn #1	*10/5	9N	44E	18	Freemont, ID	USFS/Forest
	*10/8	9N	44E	07		
	*12/6	9N	44E	06		
	*13/3	9N	44E	05		
	*15/6, 15/8	10N	44E	20		
	*19/8	11N	44E	32		
	*25/7	11N	44E	06		
	*29/4	12N	44E	30		
	31/8	12N	44E	36		
*Cross arm replacement only						
Macks Inn-Madison #1	11/3	14N	4E	25	Gallatin, MT	USFS/Forest
Swan Valley-Teton	5/5	2N	43E	12	Bonneville, ID	Private/Range
Targhee-Drummond #1	12/3	5N	44E	03	Teton, ID	Private/Ag
	22/9	7N	43E	24		
Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Swan Valley-Goshen #1	24/8	2N	40E	08	Bonneville, ID	Private/Ag.
	24/5	2N	40E	07		Private/Ag

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 deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) at the locations specified in the Location Section of this document. 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. Cross arms and braces may be changed out at other locations along the lines. New landing construction or access road development is not planned at these locations. Minor maintenance of landing and roads within their existing road and landing prisms may be required.

The proposed action 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

Fred Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 2, 2015

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist

Effects Determination for T&E Species

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: Idaho Falls 2015 Wood Pole Replacement and Access Road Maintenance

Project Site Description

The project activities will be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights of way. The site locations primarily consist of private and Federal lands (USFS Freemont National Forest). The project area ranges from mostly flat to mountainous terrain. Vegetation consists of grasses and steppe shrubs

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"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Explanation:</u> 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 stormwater 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. Poles will be placed in 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.▪ 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> The project will require minimal ground disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands will be affected. All disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings and 15 feet from the poles will be reseeded.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No trees will be removed; about one acre of grasses/shrubs will be disturbed (mostly non-native or invasive species). All disturbed areas outside of the roadways, landings and 15 feet from the poles will be reseeded.		

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



Explanation: No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species. The work will also entail minimal human disturbance.

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



Explanation: None present in project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: None present in project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed work is in an upland area; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 10 feet below ground surface.

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



Explanation: No change in land use and no specially designated areas identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: New wood poles will be similar to existing structures would not be noticeably different than existing structures. Access road work would be consistent with existing roads.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities will 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.

- ☒ Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

- ☒ 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.

- ☒ 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.

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Notification letters will be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to all landowners prior to work.

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
Fred Walasavage

Date: April 2, 2015