

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Chief Joseph-Foster Creek Underground Fiber Optic Cable Installation

Project No.: P01114

Project Manager: Robert Trismen, TEP-CSB-1

Location: Chief Joseph Substation, Douglas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to install approximately 0.5 mile of underground fiber optic cable between BPA's Chief Joseph Substation and Douglas County Public Utility District's Foster Creek Substation. The proposed fiber is needed to support upgrades to the existing analog communication path with the generating plant at Wells Dam. The fiber optic cable would be installed in an area approximately 120 to 150 feet northeast of Chief Joseph Substation Road using horizontal directional drilling. In addition to the fiber optic cable, BPA would install one below ground fiber optic cable vault immediately outside the perimeter fence at each substation. From each of these vaults BPA would extend the fiber optic cable to the Chief Joseph and Foster Creek control houses using existing underground conduit. BPA would also install related electrical components within each control house.

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/ Justin Moffett

Justin Moffett

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Date: September 14, 2015

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): 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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned land adjacent to the Chief Joseph Substation near the town of Bridgeport, Washington. Existing vegetation consists of rabbitbrush, sagebrush, and invasive weeds such as tumbled mustard. An unnamed ephemeral tributary to Foster Creek flows through two culverts located under Chief Joseph Substation Road. The surrounding landscape consists of open space, fruit orchards, and one residence approximately 500 feet north of Foster Creek Substation.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred with BPA's determination of No Historic Properties Affected on September 2, 2015. BPA also consulted with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, which also concurred with BPA's determination.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u></p> <p>✓ In the event any archaeological 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 immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, DAHP, 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.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Erosion control measures would be installed prior to ground disturbance. Excess soils remaining after the underground fiber installation would be disposed of in accordance with the project Pollution Abatement Clearance issued by BPA's department of Pollution, Prevention, and Abatement.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No federal/state special-status species or habitat present. Ground disturbance would primarily occur in previously disturbed areas.</p>		

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



Explanation: No federal/state special-status species or habitat present. Ground disturbance would primarily occur in previously disturbed areas.

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



Explanation: No in-water work proposed. Water required for the drilling would be brought to the project site in a water truck; no water would be diverted from nearby waterbodies. Erosion control and spill prevention measures would be implemented to prevent sediment and pollutants from entering the ephemeral stream that crosses the fiber route south of Chief Joseph Substation Road.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The fiber optic cable would not be deep enough to intercept the local groundwater table, which the Douglas County soil survey indicates occurs at a depth of more than 6 feet along the proposed fiber route.

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



Explanation: Proposed action is located adjacent to existing facilities on BPA fee-owned land and would not alter or affect existing land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Proposed action is located adjacent to existing facilities and would not alter or affect visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation would be temporary and negligible.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Drilling for the fiber optic cable would last approximately 2 weeks, and would occur during daylight hours (7am-4pm). There is one residence approximately 500 feet north of Foster Creek Substation. At that distance noise generated by the drilling rig and other construction equipment (estimated to be 115 A-weighted decibels) would be sufficiently attenuated so as not to disturb the residence.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Proposed action is located within existing facilities and would not impact human health or safety. All drilling waste would be disposed of off-site in accordance with Washington State regulations as stipulated in the project Pollution Abatement Clearance issued by BPA's department of Pollution, Prevention, and Abatement.

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: No notification – all work would occur within existing facilities and would not affect adjacent landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Justin Moffett

Date: September 14, 2015