

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Ross-Lexington No. 1 Transmission Structure Inspections

PP&A No.: 3,520

Project Manager: Kevin Machtelinckx - TELM-TPP-3

Location: Clark County, WA, & Cowlitz County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to conduct an inspection of transmission tower steel lattice legs and concrete footings at 187 towers of the Ross-Lexington No. 1 230 kV transmission line. The action is to address potential corrosion of the steel lattice and degradation of concrete footings, which may be impacting the structural integrity of the towers and putting the transmission lines at risk. The project would involve soil sampling for redox potential and pH testing, visual inspection of the steel lattice legs, and hand excavation 12 – 24 inches deep in the immediate vicinity of the concrete and plate footings to inspect the concrete and steel lattice below ground surface. The inspection at each steel lattice tower would be documented for later repairs, as necessary. The excavated area would then be backfilled and restored with an appropriate seed mix.

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/ Aaron Siemers

Aaron Siemers

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 24, 2017

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.

Proposed Action: Ross-Lexington No. 1 Transmission Structure Inspections

Project Site Description

The proposed project sites are located along BPA's Ross-Lexington No. 1 230 kV transmission line which runs from Ross Substation in Clark County, WA, to Lexington Substation in Cowlitz County, WA. The ground disturbing work would be completed in the compacted backfill footprint that was emplaced during the original construction of the towers. Tower locations range from urban and suburban areas, to rolling foothills and farmlands. The transmission line starts at Ross Substation in Vancouver, WA, in the Portland/Vancouver basin before crossing the foothills of the western Cascades lowlands and valleys, and then dropping back into the Columbia River valley near Lexington Substation. The locations of the towers, and the towers proposed for inspection under this project, are listed below:

Township		Range		Section	Towers
2	N	1	E	14	1/1
2	N	1	E	11	1/2, 1/3, 1/4, 1/5, 1/6, 1/7, 2/1, 2/2
2	N	1	E	59	2/3, 2/4
2	N	1	E	1	2/5, 3/1
2	N	1	E	58	3/2, 3/3, 3/4
3	N	1	E	36	3/5, 3/6, 4/1, 4/2, 4/3
3	N	1	E	25	4/4, 4/5, 5/1, 5/2, 5/3
3	N	1	E	24	5/4, 6/1, 6/2, 6/3
3	N	1	E	13	6/4, 6/5, 7/1, 7/2, 7/3
3	N	1	E	12	7/4, 8/1, 8/2, 8/3, 8/4
3	N	1	E	1	8/5, 8/6, 9/1, 9/2,
4	N	1	E	36	9/3, 9/4, 10/1, 10/2, 10/3
4	N	1	E	25	10/4, 10/5, 11/1, 11/2, 11/3
4	N	1	E	24	11/4, 11/5, 12/1, 12/2, 12/3, 12/4
4	N	1	E	13	12/5, 12/6, 13/1, 13/2
4	N	1	E	12	13/3, 13/4, 13/5, 14/1, 14/2
4	N	1	E	1	14/3, 15/1, 15/2, 15/3, 15/4
5	N	1	E	36	15/5, 15/6, 16/1, 16/2, 16/3
5	N	1	E	25	16/4, 17/1, 17/2, 17/3
5	N	1	E	24	17/4, 17/5, 18/1, 18/2, 18/3
5	N	1	E	13	18/4, 19/1, 19/2
5	N	1	E	12	19/3, 19/4
5	N	1	E	11	19/5, 20/1
5	N	1	E	2	20/2, 20/5, 21/1, 21/2, 21/3
6	N	1	E	35	21/4, 21/5, 22/1
6	N	1	E	34	22/2, 22/3
6	N	1	E	27	23/1, 23/2, 23/3
6	N	1	E	22	23/4, 23/5, 24/1, 24/2
6	N	1	E	21	24/3
6	N	1	E	16	24/4, 25/1, 25/2, 25/3, 25/4, 25/5
6	N	1	E	9	26/1, 26/2, 26/3, 26/4, 26/5, 26/6

6	N	1	E	5	27/1, 27/2, 27/3, 27/4, 28/1, 28/2
7	N	1	E	31	28/3, 28/4, 29/1, 29/2, 29/3
7	N	1	E	30	29/4, 30/1
7	N	1	W	25	30/2, 30/3, 30/4, 30/5
7	N	1	W	23	31/1, 31/2, 31/3, 31/4, 32/1, 32/2
7	N	1	W	15	32/3, 32/4, 33/1, 33/2, 33/3, 33/4, 34/1
7	N	1	W	10	34/2
7	N	1	W	9	34/3, 34/4, 35/1, 35/2
7	N	1	W	4	35/3
7	N	1	W	5	35/4, 36/1, 36/2, 36/3, 36/4, 36/5, 36/6
8	N	1	W	31	37/1, 37/2, 37/3, 38/1, 38/2
8	N	2	W	25	38/3, 38/4, 38/5, 39/1, 39/2, 39/3, 39/4
8	N	2	W	23	40/1, 40/2, 40/3, 40/4, 40/5, 40/6
8	N	2	W	14	41/1, 41/2
8	N	2	W	15	41/3

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



Explanation: BPA archaeology staff reviewed the project, and due to the limited ground disturbance, which would involve 12"-24" inches of soil excavation immediately surrounding the concrete and plate footings, and the fact that all excavation would take place in previously disturbed, backfilled soils, the project was deemed to not have potential to impact historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils



Explanation: The project would have minimal soil disturbance. All disturbed soil will be backfilled and compacted upon project completion.

3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation: No special-status species are known to be present at the work sites. Federal & State endangered plant data shows no presence of endangered species. Work would be conducted in an existing transmission line right-of-way (ROW). Soil disturbance would be isolated around steel lattice legs, and conducted with hand tools. The sites would be reseeded upon backfill with a climate appropriate seed mix. The project has no potential to effect special status plants.

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



Explanation: Near tower 37/1, state records show the location of a bald eagle nest. However, due to the limited scope of the project, which involves hand excavation without heavy machinery, project activities would not disturb the nest if it happened to be active. No other special status species are known to be present in the work sites, and no designated habitat is present in the work area. The project has no potential to effect endangered species and other wildlife.

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



Explanation: Standard erosion control BMPs would be implemented and no riparian habitat would be affected. No endangered fish-bearing streams would be impacted by the project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Six structure sites are located in areas listed in the National Wetland Inventory. However, these sites can easily be approached on foot, standing or flowing water is not present, and water quality would not be impacted by excavation. No additional fill material would be emplaced at the work sites, so permitting or notification to regulatory agencies is not required. Standard erosion control BMPs would be implemented

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of ground water is proposed.

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



Explanation: Existing land use would not be affected. All the work is within the BPA right-of-way, and no specially designated areas are present.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All excavations are located around steel tower legs. There would be no impacts to visual quality from the scope of work.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project would involve hand-digging, inspection and repair near steel-lattice transmission towers. There would be no significant impacts to air quality from the scope of work.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: The project would involve hand-digging, inspection and repair near steel-lattice transmission towers. There would be no significant impacts to ambient noise from the scope of work.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Workers on the project would follow a safety plan. The project 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: NA

- ☒ 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: NA

- ☒ 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: NA

- ☒ 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The proposed project is located on private and public land. BPA will continue ongoing coordination with the landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Siemers
Aaron Siemers
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: April 24, 2017