Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Quenett Creek Substation Construction

Project Numbers: L0380, LURR 20170161

Project Manager: Amy Gardner - TEP-TPP-1

Location: Wasco County, OR and Klickitat County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities and B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to construct a new substation called Quenett Creek Substation in The Dalles, Oregon. The new substation is required to accommodate Northern Wasco County Public Utility District's (NWCPUD) interconnection request for 300 megawatts of power to meet increased load demand in the area and to serve a new customer-owned data center. The proposed project would include activities in Wasco County, Oregon and Klickitat County, Washington. Major project components include acquisition of approximately 4.7 acres of land from Port of The Dalles, construction of Quenett Creek Substation, equipment upgrades at Chenoweth Substation, permanent relocation of three structures on the Chenoweth-Goldendale No. 1 transmission line, temporary shoo-fly installation, construction of access roads, installation of fiber grounding conductor, upgrade of the Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1 115-kilovolt (kV) line to 230-kV, replacement of six existing wood pole structures on the Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1 transmission line, installation of new poles at Big Eddy Substation, and equipment upgrades inside Big Eddy Substation.

Quenett Creek Substation would be constructed adjacent to BPA's existing Chenoweth Substation, within an existing transmission line corridor containing three BPA transmission lines: Chenoweth-Goldendale No. 1, Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1, and Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 2. Quenett Creek Substation would be a three bay, breaker and one-half, 230-kV substation. BPA would acquire 4.7 acres of mostly undeveloped land for the construction of the substation and access road. Access to the substation site would be from River Road, an existing paved road. Four and a half acres of the 4.7 acres are on existing BPA right-of-way. The site would be excavated and graded, and fill material would be brought in as needed.

Equipment upgrades would be required at Chenoweth Substation including adding/replacing disconnect switches, relays, and buses; and adding arresters, communication equipment, and a 230/115-kV power transformer. In addition, 300 feet of fiber optic cable, grounding, and station service cable would be installed underground between Quenett Creek Substation and Chenoweth Substation. New overhead 230-kV lines would be installed from Chenoweth Substation to Quenett Creek Substation.

Structure modifications/installations include permanent relocation of three structures on the Chenoweth-Goldendale No. 1 transmission line, temporary shoo-fly installation for Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 2 transmission line, retermination of existing transmission lines into the new Quenett Creek Substation, installation of five new structures at Big Eddy Substation, and replacement of six existing wood pole structures with 10- to 20-foot taller structures on the Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1

transmission line. Replacement of these structures is due to the upgrade of the Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1 from 115-kV to 230-kV. Access roads to new structures would also be constructed.

Equipment upgrades would be required at Big Eddy Substation including: installation and/or replacement of conductor, 230/115-kV power transformers, current transformers, disconnect switches, power circuit breakers, arrestors, and relaying. In addition, some equipment and conductor would be removed. The substation yard would be expanded by 2.9 acres on fee-owned property for new equipment.

BPA would allow NWCPUD to install two 230-kV lines and supporting infrastructure from Quenett Creek Substation to an adjacent customer-owned substation, called Taylor Lake-1 (TLK1). Also, there will be underground grounding conductor, and fiber optic cable would be installed between the two sites.

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/ Elizabeth Siping
Elizabeth Siping
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard
Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: *January 9, 2018*
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment: 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: Quenett Creek Substation Construction

Project Site Description

The project area includes activities at BPA's Chenoweth Substation, at Big Eddy Substation, and at six structures along the existing transmission line corridor between Chenoweth Substation and Big Eddy Substation. Both substations are located in The Dalles in Wasco County, Oregon. The transmission lines are approximately 7.5 miles long and cross the Columbia River in two places. No in-water work is being proposed. The area surrounding Chenoweth Substation is being developed by Port of the Dalles for commercial use.

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: Consulting parties for this project include: Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Washington State's Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Nez Perce Tribe. BPA determined that the project would have an adverse effect to cultural properties and entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the CTUIR and OR SHPO; the ACHP declined to participate on the grounds that they did not believe their participation was necessary. All project activities would be done in accordance with the stipulations in the MOA.

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

- Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA Cultural Resource Lead, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Oregon SHPO, and the appropriate local, 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.

Mitigation:

- Ensure professional archaeologist is on site during all ground-disturbing activities.
- Ensure cultural resource monitor is on site during all ground-disturbing activities.
- BPA had intended to sell 0.4 acres of undeveloped fee-owned land to Port of The Dalles; however, at the request of CTUIR, the land would remain in Federal ownership.
- BPA will provide funding to the CTUIR Cultural Resource Protection Program (CRPP) to implement an 'Elder-in-residence' program within the CRPP.

2. **Geology and Soils**	☑	☐

Explanation: Approximately 5 acres of soil disturbance would occur at the Quenett Creek Substation site and approximately 3 acres of soil disturbance would occur at the Big Eddy Substation site. Soil disturbance associated with six structure replacements along the Big Eddy-Chenoweth No. 1 transmission line would be approximately

100 ft by 100 ft for each structure.

Mitigation:

- Control dust during construction, using water trucks or other appropriate methods, as needed.
- A project Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and implemented that would include erosion and sediment control best management practices.
- Disturbed areas would be re-seeded after construction activities are complete at the appropriate time period for germination with a locally-adapted, native seed mix approved by BPA environmental staff.
- A Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan would be implemented in accordance with Federal, state, and local requirements that addresses fuel and chemical storage, spill containment and cleanup, construction contractor training, and proper spilled material disposal activities.

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

Explanation: No tree clearing is required for this project. Some vegetation would be cleared for site preparation for substation construction, as well as for structure replacement along the transmission line corridor and structure installation at Big Eddy Substation. No special-status species are known to occur in the project area.

Mitigation:

- All construction vehicles will be cleaned prior to coming onto project sites to remove weed seeds, vegetative matter, soils, oil and greases, etc.

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

Explanation: No special-status species are known to occur in the project area.

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

Explanation: The existing transmission line corridor crosses floodplains and also the Columbia River in two places. No work in or near the Columbia River or its floodplain is proposed. Therefore, no impacts to fish would occur. A project Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed and implemented that would include best management practices.

6. **Wetlands** ☑ ☐

Explanation: Two wetland delineations were conducted for the vicinity and wetlands were found to be present within the area of potential effect. No work is planned in existing wetlands.

Mitigation:

- Avoid using wetland areas for construction staging, equipment or materials storage, fueling of vehicles, or related activities.
- Flag or stake wetland boundaries in the vicinity of construction areas and avoid these areas during construction.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers** ☐ ☑

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed. The development of the site would result in additional impermeable surface.

Mitigation: Stormwater management best management practices (BMPs) would mitigate any potential impacts.

- Meet the stormwater and low impact development requirements of Section 438 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA).
- Meet Port of The Dalles stormwater requirements, which state that all stormwater should be managed on site and that stormwater may have no negative effects on adjacent downstream landowners.

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

Explanation: The proposed substation construction is consistent with existing use in the project areas. The new substation would be located in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area; however, it is designated as an urban area that is exempt from the scenic area land-use conditions.

9.	**Visual Quality**	☑	☐

Explanation: The new substation and new structures would be visually consistent with existing uses in the area.

10.	**Air Quality**	☑	☐

Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to temporary construction activities.

11.	**Noise**	☑	☐

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur. The new substation would emit operational noise; however, it would not be signficicantly different from noise associated with the adjacent Chenoweth Substation.

12.	**Human Health and Safety**	☑	☐

Explanation: No impact to human health and safety is anticipated.

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: BPA has discussed the proposed project with the Port of The Dalles, which is the current landowner of the property that would be acquired for substation construction. Proposed work within the existing transmission line corridor is permissible by existing easement rights. Proposed work at Big Eddy Substation would all occur on BPA fee-owned land and therefore, notification is only required to one existing agricultural leaseholder.

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

Signed: */s/ Elizabeth Siping* Date: *January 9, 2018*
Elizabeth Siping – ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC