

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

**Proposed Action Title: Craig-Bonanza 345-kV Transmission Line Access Road
and Right-of-Way Maintenance**

Location: Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties, Colorado; Uintah County, Utah

Project Number: 2020-051

Expiration Date: December 31, 2027

A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to conduct routine access road and right-of-way (ROW) maintenance at select structures as listed below on the Craig-Bonanza (CRG-BOZ) 345-kV Transmission Line in Moffat and Rio Blanco counties, Colorado, and Uintah County, Utah. The primary work required is landing construction and clearing of vegetation to facilitate safe vehicle and equipment access for an upcoming insulator replacement project. Vegetation clearing and landing construction, with seeding and soil stabilization as necessary, will occur within the approved work areas around the transmission line structures. Routine access road maintenance on existing roads to access Structures 1/2 and 43/1 will also occur and may include blading; grading; removal of rocks, vegetation, and other obstacles impeding safe travel; installation, repair, and replacement of water bars, rip-rap, and other erosion control measures; and cleanout, repair, and in-kind replacement of culverts and other drainage features. Equipment used for this project may include skid-steer loaders with brush-hog attachments, mulchers, chippers, chainsaws, hydroseeder, motor graders, bulldozers, excavators, dump trucks, compactors, skid-steers, and work trucks. Work will occur on private lands and public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), State of Colorado, and State of Utah. Some work will occur outside of WAPA's existing ROWs with landowner consent. No new roads will be constructed.

CRG-BOZ Structure	Covered Activity	Size of Approved Work Area
0/0B and 0/1	Landing construction	125-ft radius from center of structure
0/2	Structure clearing	100-ft radius from center of structure
1/1	Landing construction/structure clearing	125-ft radius from center of structure
1/2	Access road maintenance	100-ft-wide corridor centered on access road centerline
	Landing construction/structure clearing	125-ft radius from center of structure
5/5	Landing construction/structure clearing	125-ft radius from center of structure
7/4, 8/5, 10/1, and 13/4	Structure clearing	100-ft radius from center of structure
19/1 and 19/3	Landing construction/structure clearing	125-ft radius from center of structure

21/4, 22/1, and 22/3	Structure clearing	100-ft radius from center of structure
24/1 and 38/3	Landing construction/structure clearing	125-ft radius from center of structure
43/1	Access road maintenance	100-ft-wide corridor centered on access road centerline
	Landing construction/structure clearing	125-ft radius from center of structure
64/4	Structure clearing	100-ft radius from center of structure
69/2	Landing construction/structure clearing	175-ft radius from center of structure
76/2	Landing construction	125-ft radius from center of structure
76/6 and 83/4	Structure clearing	100-ft radius from center of structure
94/1 and 99/5	Landing construction	125-ft radius from center of structure

B. STIPULATIONS PERTAINING TO PROPOSAL:

- 1) If the scope of work of this project changes, RMR's Environment Department must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.
- 2) **This Categorical Exclusion expires on December 31, 2027.** If all project work has not been completed by the expiration date, or if the need for an environmental compliance extension is anticipated, RMR's Environment Department must be contacted for an updated environmental review.
- 3) **All structures must be accessed using existing access roads; no overland travel within the ROW is authorized without further review from RMR's Environment Department.**
- 4) **The Environmental Restrictions Area maps provided to WAPA's maintenance crews show the access roads and ROW areas approved for maintenance.** If clarification of maps is required, please contact RMR's Archaeologist at (970) 286-3523 or RMR's Natural Resource Specialist at (970) 593-8803.
- 5) **The Environmental Restrictions Area maps provided to WAPA's maintenance crews include biological resource boundaries.** Work within these boundaries must be avoided between March 1 and July 15 to prevent disturbance to breeding and nesting greater sage-grouse.
- 6) WAPA's maintenance crews must carefully inspect vegetation for active avian nests prior to any structure clearing activities between May 15 and August 15. Vegetation must be inspected no more than five (5) calendar days in advance of structure clearing activities during this time period.



If an active avian nest is found in vegetation that needs trimmed or removed, structure clearing activities must be delayed until the nest is no longer active. An avian nest becomes active when the first egg is laid, and remains active until all offspring have fledged (left the nest) and the nest is empty. Inactive (empty) nests that do not belong to threatened species, endangered species, or eagles may be removed and destroyed in accordance with WAPA's Avian Protection Plan (APP). Contact RMR's Environment Department prior to nest removal to ensure conformance with the APP.

- 7) Any injured or orphaned birds and all observed active nests must be immediately reported to RMR Environment at (970) 593-8803 or (970) 342-6462. Any dead birds must be reported to RMR Environment within twenty-four (24) hours of discovery. Additional documentation, such as photographs and GPS coordinates, may be requested to support RMR's reporting requirements to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 8) If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and an RMR Archaeologist must be contacted immediately at (970) 302-4753 or (970) 286-3523. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR Archaeologist.
- 9) If any possible human remains are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and an RMR Archaeologist must be notified immediately at (970) 302-4753 or (970) 286-3523 (no later than 24 hours from the time of discovery). A reasonable effort must be made to protect the remains from looting and/or further damage. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR Archaeologist.
- 10) Vehicles and equipment (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) will not be moved between work areas without first taking reasonable measures to ensure they are free of soil, seeds, vegetation matter, or other debris that could contain noxious weed seeds.
- 11) Activities involving the use of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other petroleum products must comply with RMR's Spill Response Plan (SRP).

C. NUMBER AND TITLE OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION BEING APPLIED:

(See text in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D.)

B1.3 Routine maintenance

D. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS 10 CFR 1021.410 (b): (See full text in regulation)

- ☒ The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B of 10 CFR 1021.



To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of the Department of Energy (DOE) or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances; pollutants; contaminants; or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) 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.

☒ There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

☒ The proposal has not been improperly segmented, and the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

E. DETERMINATION:

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**JAMES
WOOD**

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JAMES WOOD
Date: 2022.04.14
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Signature and Date

James Wood, Regional Environmental Manager
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