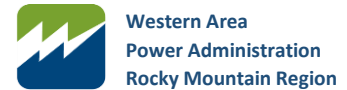


# CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



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**Proposed Action Title: Poncha Switchyard Shoo-Fly/Distribution Line Installation**

**Location: Chaffee County, Colorado**

**Project Number: 2024-070**

**Expiration Date: December 31, 2030**

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## **A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:**

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to construct an above ground temporary shoo-fly or permanent distribution line to replace a 25-kilovolt (kV) buried cable that provides station service power to the Poncha (PON) Switchyard in Chaffee County, Colorado. The buried cable regularly faults, resulting in power outages. The proposed action is intended to prevent future faults and subsequent power outages. Once the proposed action is completed, the buried cable will either be removed or abandoned. Equipment used for the proposed action may include an auger/crane truck, conductor spool trailer, and a utility truck. Work will occur on private lands and within WAPA's property boundary associated with the PON Switchyard. No access road maintenance or new road construction is authorized.

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## **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, 2030.** 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) **The approved work areas map provided to WAPA's maintenance crews shows the area approved for maintenance.** The approved work area includes the indicated corridor to a width of 100 feet (50 feet either side of buried cable). If clarification of map is required, please contact RMR's Archaeologist at (970) 286-3523 or RMR's Natural Resource Specialist at (970) 473-5586.
- 4) 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.
- 4) 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, (970) 286-3523, or (970) 658-6794. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR Archaeologist.

5) 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, (970) 286-3523, or (970) 658-6794 (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.

6) 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.

7) 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.

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#### **E. DETERMINATION:**

WAPA follows the regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508, in addition to the Department of Energy’s regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 to meet the agency’s obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

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.

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Signature and Date

James Wood  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by:  
Gail Martinez, Natural Resource Specialist  
Brian Joseph, Regional Preservation Official

