

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY21 Maupin-Redmond No1. Redmond Pole Replacement Project

PP&A No.: P04462

Project Manager: Jodie Anderson, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Deschutes, Jefferson and Wasco Counties, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace in-kind of wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g., cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc..) along the Maupin-Redmond No 1 transmission lines in the Redmond TLM District.

Approximately 26 poles would be replaced. After current pole structures are removed, replacement poles would be placed approximately 5 feet ahead or back online from the existing structure. Maintenance along existing access road prisms and landings would be performed where necessary to facilitate safe access and several gravel stockpile locations in or next to the right-of-way would be utilized. Access road maintenance includes blading, shaping, rocking, and construction of water bars and drain dips. Approximately 13 waterbars, 2 drain dips and 8 gates would be installed. Around 6.5 miles of access road maintenance would occur and around 30, approximately 50-foot by 50-foot landings would be constructed. Approximately 0.3 miles (1375 linear feet) of new access road would be created. A material yard, referred to as the Madras yard, located in Madras within Jefferson County would be utilized. The Madras yard requires no additional grading or rocking. A second material yard in Brothers within Deschutes County and referred to as the Hampton material yard would be graded and rocked. The Madras material yard is approximately 1.5 acres in size and the Hampton yard is approximately 2.7 acres in size. Staging areas for gravel and road work material would be utilized in several sections throughout the project area. A summary of the structures to be replaced is below in Table 1.

Table 1. Structure replacements on the Maupin-Redmond No 1 Transmission line

Structure Work	Township	Range	Section	Land Ownership
5/1	ORT5S	R14E	14	private
15/5, 17/4, 17/6, 18/8, 19/4, 19/6	ORT7S	R15E	5, 16, 21, 28	private
24/3	ORT8S	R15E	18	private
27/8	ORT9S	R14E	1	private

28/6, 29/2, 32/4	ORT9S	R14E	12, 26	private
37/1, 36/7, 37/5	ORT10S	R14E	15, 22	US Forest Service (USFS)
43/8, 45/3, 46/5	ORT11S	R14E	18, 30, 31	private, USFS
48/4, 49/5, 49/8, 52/3	ORT12S	R14E	7, 18, 31	USFS
53/7, 54/2, 55/1, 55/5	ORT13S	R13E	1, 11, 14	USFS
60/5	ORT14S	R13E	5	private
68/1, 68/8	ORT15S	R13E	7	private

The proposed project would help to maintain reliable power in the region. The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

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, Jul. 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/ Zoe Wellschlager

Zoe Wellschlager

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 4, 2025

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*

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: FY21 Maupin-Redmond No1. Redmond Pole Replacement Project

Project Site Description

The project is in Central Oregon within the Blue Mountains and Columbia Plateau ecoregions and the Umatilla Plateau and Deschutes River Valley sub-ecoregions. It is characterized by grasslands, sagebrush, and ponderosa pine dominated forests. Most of the project area is private property utilized as timberland and grazing land. Several structures are located within the Crooked River National Grassland, managed under the US Forest service.

The transmission line corridor ranges from 40 feet to 450 feet wide in width in the project area. Soils are generally silty, sandy and rocky, with patchy vegetation cover. Vegetation within the right-of-way is periodically managed to remove tall growing vegetation and promote low-growing species. Adjacent to the right-of-way are pines, juniper and other tree species within forested sections of the project area. Native shrubs such as sagebrush, rabbitbrush and various grasses dominate the dryer sections of the project area. Several intermittent waterways and small wetlands are present near or in the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation:

On July 31st, 2024, BPA initiated consultation with the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Klamath Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO), the Ochoco National Forest (USFS), and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) via a letter dated October 23, 2024. Portions of this project fall within the Crooked River National Grassland which is owned and managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS) Ochoco National Forest. BPA is acting as the lead federal agency for Section 106 responsibilities. The USFS concurred with BPA's consulting parties and project APE.

For those eligible and unevaluated sites identified during field surveys, BPA would implement various avoids measures (avoidance, flagging, monitoring, etc.).

BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect to historic resources. On February 19th, the USFS Ochoco National Forest concurred with BPA's determination. BPA sent a final no adverse effect to historic resources determination on February 27, 2025. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

- In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped and the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager would be immediately notified. Reasonable measures would be taken to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.”

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All wood pole replacements would be in-kind and would be placed near the locations of the existing poles. Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements, landing improvements, access road maintenance and new construction activities and during material yard setup. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federal special-status, state listed, or USFS sensitive plants are present. However, if any federal or state listed plant species are unknowingly in the project area, project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. No concerns about sensitive plant species were expressed by public land managers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction on the project would likely disturb wildlife in the area due to the presence of humans and additional noise. However, disturbance would be temporary and limited to the already impacted right-of-way and access roads and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected in the long term.

Notes:

- In the event an active eagle nest is discovered, maintain 660 feet from nest and conduct work outside of eagle breeding season between October 1st and December 15th. Notify BPA Environmental Lead.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is planned in or near any waterbody. The work location is in arid eastern Oregon. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Several different types of wetlands exist in or near the project area near where roadwork improvement would occur; however, the road work planned would be on existing roadways and should not create an additional impact to the wetlands present. Furthermore, work is planned for mid-spring when water table levels would be lower and there is less risk of disturbing the adjacent wetlands. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Land use in the area consists of transportation, timber harvest and forestry, recreation, agricultural, ranching and transmission easement. The project would not result in permanent changes to land use, though temporary impacts to some recreational users may occur. Alternative roads near the project area could still be utilized by recreationists in addition to alternative recreational areas. There may be temporary disturbances to some land use areas, including the Crooked River National Grassland (CRNG). However, the work would be consistent with the land use plan in place and no new access roads are proposed for the CRNG. The material yards for pole storage would be developed to manage treated wood poles. Appropriate BMPs would be utilized to contain the treated wood poles.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way and access roads. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in kind and in the same location. The project would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area. A fugitive dust plan would be implemented to control dust generation, if needed. With an appropriate dust control mitigation plan, the project would have minor, temporary impacts to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change. The project area is also relatively remote and located away from more concentrated recreational sites and other places of human activity.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery in the region.

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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty notified and coordinated with the landowners/managers in advance of the construction of the proposed project. The BPA realty specialist has been in contact with the USFS and they were given advance notice of the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Zoe Wellschlager

Zoe Wellschlager

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 4, 2025