

# CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



Western Area  
Power Administration  
Rocky Mountain Region

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**Proposed Action Title: Beaver Creek-Last Chance 115-kV Transmission Line Overhead Ground Wire Replacement and Structure Replacement**

**Location: Washington County, Colorado**

**Project Number: 2025-038 & 2025-039**

**Expiration Date: December 31, 2030**

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

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to replace the existing overhead ground wire (OGW) with optical ground wire (OPGW) and replace an existing structure on its Beaver Creek-Last Chance (BC-LT) 115-kV Transmission Line in Washington County, Colorado. The purpose of this project is to update and improve WAPA's communication system. The OPGW will be installed between an existing splice point at WAPA's Woodrow (WOD) Substation and Structure 22/4 on the BC-LT 115-kV Transmission Line. Structure 22/4 will be replaced to accommodate the other necessary OPGW splice point. The new transmission structure will be 5 to 10 feet taller than the existing structure and will have minor structural updates to meet current WAPA design standards, but it will be visually similar to the existing structures. The new structure will be placed in the existing structure hole if possible. The OPGW will not be visibly different from the existing OGW. The existing OGW will be used to pull the new OPGW into place, with pulling sites positioned at regular intervals to pull, wind, and remove the OGW, and feed, tighten, and secure the new OPGW. Equipment used for this project may include helicopters, bucket trucks, wire pullers and tensioners, cranes, splicing trailers, cable reel trailers, truck-mounted augers, skid-steer loaders, pole trailers, equipment trailers, and utility trucks. Work will be confined to WAPA's ROW on private lands. The ROW will be accessed by existing access routes; 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) 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 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).
- 8) To prevent the transport of non-native and invasive plants and animals, including noxious weeds and aquatic nuisance species, work crews must thoroughly wash all vehicles and equipment (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) before entering the action area and working on the project.

**C. NUMBER AND TITLE OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION BEING APPLIED:**  
(See text in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D.)

B4.7. Fiber optic cable

**D. REGULATORY AND GUIDANCE IN 10 CFR 1021.102 AND DOE's NEPA IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES:** (See full text in regulation and in Implementing Procedures)

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see 10 CFR 1021.102 and Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, and also Section 5.4 (Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).



The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B and C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. DOE or an applicant may modify the proposal to avoid reasonably foreseeable adverse significant effects such that the categorical exclusion would apply.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

[Note: For proposals that fit within the categorical exclusions listed in Appendix C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, see DOE's notice of adoption for the subject Appendix C categorical exclusion for additional considerations. DOE notices of adoption for other agency categorical exclusions may be found on DOE's Section 109 webpage.]

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## **E. DETERMINATION:**

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory guidance 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, Regional Environmental Manager  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by:  
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