

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



Proposed Action Title: Emergency Vegetation Management on the Curecanti – Crystal 115-kV Transmission Line

Location: Montrose County, CO

Project Number: 2025-055

Expiration Date: November 30, 2025

A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), conducted emergency mechanical vegetation management on its existing Curecanti-Crystal (CCI-CRY) 115-kV Transmission Line, in Montrose County, Colorado. This emergency Right-of-Way (ROW) vegetation management was completed between structures 8/4 to 10/7 on July 14, 2025 in an effort to protect transmission line infrastructure from the encroaching South Rim wildfire. Activities included mechanical treatment of vegetation within the 75 foot wide ROW. Equipment used for this project included masticators, skid-steer loaders with brush-hog attachments, pickup trucks and ATVs. Work was confined to WAPA's right-of-way (ROW) on private lands, and public lands managed by the National Park Service – Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. The ROW was accessed by existing access routes; no new road construction occurred.

B. STIPULATIONS PERTAINING TO PROPOSAL:

This Categorical Exclusion (CX) covers work that has already been completed. No further work is authorized under this CX. If additional work is required, RMR's Environment Department must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.

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

B1.3 Routine maintenance

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.]

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.

Signature and Date

James Wood, Regional Environmental Manager
Rocky Mountain Region
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by:
Gail Martinez, Natural Resource Specialist
Abraham Thompson, Archaeologist

