

**Glass Butte Communication Site**  
Finding of No Significant Impact  
Bonneville Power Administration  
DOE/EA-1996  
February 2019

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**INTRODUCTION**

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Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) announces its environmental findings for its proposal to install a communications facility on Glass Butte, an area managed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Prineville District Office. The Glass Butte communications facility will join BPA's existing Harney Substation to Pine Mountain Analog Radio Communications Spur Line, which requires the replacement of aging and obsolete analog communications equipment. BPA filed an application with the Bureau of Land Management BLM Prineville District Office requesting a right-of-way for the facility, which required the BLM to amend its 1989 Brothers-La Pine Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The BLM, in cooperation with BPA developed an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The EA was released for a 30-day public comment period in August 2017. One comment letter was received; it was from Oregon Wild requesting additional mitigation to improve sage grouse habitat, to ensure road design that would lessen possible erosion, to minimize conflicts with birds and bats, and to reduce potential construction material transport impacts. BLM responded to the comments in their 2019 Decision Record for the proposal (*Glass Butte Communication Site Right-of-Way and RMP Amendment Decision Record for the Implementation Level Actions*) and determined that the concerns Oregon Wild had expressed were addressed in the EA, mitigation measures, or project design and that no modifications to the EA were required.

BPA hereby adopts the EA, and based on its analysis and public comments received, BPA has determined that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 United States Code [USC] 4321 *et seq.*). Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required and BPA is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is not the type of action that normally requires preparation of an EIS and is not without precedent. BLM issued its own agency-specific decision document and has granted the right-of-way to BPA for the radio station facility.

Attached is a Mitigation Action Plan that lists all the mitigation measures that BPA and its contractors are committed to implementing.

**PUBLIC AVAILABILITY**

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The FONSI will be posted on BPA's project website:  
<https://www.bpa.gov/efw/Analysis/NEPADocuments/Pages/Glass-Butte-Radio-Station.aspx>

**PROPOSED ACTION**

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Under the Proposed Action, BPA would construct a 0.5-acre communication facility within an area of existing radio station facilities on Glass Butte. The automated remotely-controlled radio station would consist of a single-story 20-foot wide by 52-foot long concrete building to house communications equipment, a 100-foot tall steel-lattice tower to host several BPA and Oregon Department of

Transportation dish and whip antennas, and two 3,000 gallon propane tanks for emergency generator backup power. The facility would also have a 100-foot by 125-foot graveled entrance and would be served by a 200-foot long underground electric and fiber optic line to be installed by Harney Electric Cooperative Inc.

In addition, BPA would upgrade, use, and maintain the existing 10.6 mile access road that runs from Highway 20 to the existing radio station facilities. Road improvements would involve mostly rocking of the existing road surface, installation of waterbars, and creation of a vehicle pull out.

Facility construction would start in summer 2019 and take about six months, with work conducted up to 10 hours a day, seven days a week. Construction workers would be housed in two trailers near the site. All work would be completed within the proposed right-of-way boundary BPA obtained from BLM, including three temporary equipment staging areas.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

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To determine whether the Proposed Action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects, BLM, in cooperation with BPA, analyzed the potential impacts of the proposal on human and natural resources and presented them in Chapter 3 of the EA. The potential impacts associated with the Proposed Action are summarized below. The Proposed Action, with implementation of selected mitigation measures, would have no significant impacts. The following discussion provides a summary of the Proposed Action's potential impacts and the reasons these impacts would not be significant.

#### **Cultural Resources**

Impacts to cultural resources are not expected to be significant.

- Proposed road improvements would cross seven cultural resource sites and a proposed Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). However, the sites have already been disturbed in the road prism, thus it is not expected that improvements would affect or disturb the site surfaces beyond their current state, and implementation of mitigation measures will help lessen potential impacts.
- One staging area would be partially located over a cultural site and within the proposed TCP. Effects from the use of heavy equipment at the staging area would likely disturb the surface of the site; with mitigation measures impacts are expected to be minimal.
- The existing tower and communication facilities may obstruct the current use of the area by traditional religious practitioners. Tribal consultation has indicated that with implementation of mitigation measures, the Proposed Action would have few impacts to traditional religious practices.
- Tribal cultural resource monitors would be on site during all construction work and would ensure that cultural resources (documented and undocumented) are protected to the extent possible.

#### **Visual Resources**

Impacts to visual resources would not be significant.

- Although the tower would sit on a prominent pyramidal peak and be visible from areas to the west and north, it would be adjacent to several existing towers on the peak and would not be the dominant visual element from typical viewing distances.

- Although the building would be the largest building on the peak and visible from the east and from different locations on Highway 20, the use of dark colors and non-reflective surfaces for the building and roof would help make it less conspicuous.
- Construction activities may temporarily detract from some existing right-of-way viewsheds, particularly for area residents, recreationists, and motorists. Views of maintenance activities would be temporary and localized and would not result in significant impacts to visual resources.

### **Wildlife**

Impacts to wildlife would not be significant.

- The facility would remove about 0.5-acre of habitat where, generally, vegetation has been previously disturbed or managed on an ongoing basis.
- Habitat disturbance would be minimized by not fencing the facility to reduce habitat fragmentation and above-ground obstacles to birds in flight, and by locating the facility as close as possible to existing access roads.
- To minimize impacts to nighttime migrating or resident birds, exterior lights would have a shielded beam that would be pointed at the immediate area in the vicinity of the door. These lights would be motion activated and have limited time duration (e.g., five minutes or less).
- Weed control Best Management Practices would be used in areas disturbed by construction and maintenance to prevent degradation of wildlife habitat by noxious weeds.
- Construction and maintenance activities would result in increased noise and activity levels, which may temporarily displace wildlife near work areas. However, disturbance would be temporary and localized and levels would be expected to return to preexisting conditions after work is complete.
- The presence of the facility would not result in significant impacts to sage grouse. Seasonal construction timing restrictions would be implemented to prevent breeding or nesting sage grouse disturbance. Some sage grouse habitat would be removed as part of the staging area development. To mitigate for these impacts, BPA would help fund 45 acres of juniper removal and the closure of several steep/redundant spur roads.
- Juniper removal would consist of cutting, lopping, and scattering tree debris; no burning would be required. Actions associated with juniper removal (increased foot traffic and noise from chainsaws) would only be temporary, lasting up to 2-3 days.
- The area identified for juniper removal would be surveyed for nesting activity for neotropical migrant birds. Trees with raptor nests would be flagged and not removed. Work in areas found occupied by nesting birds would occur once the breeding season is finished, or birds have fledged.

### **Recreation**

The project would have short-term effects on recreational activities— rock-hounding (rock collecting), primitive camping, back-country exploration, off-highway vehicle (OHV) driving, and hunting—but would not have a significant impact on recreation in the area.

- Public access to the top of Glass Butte would be temporarily restricted to authorized project personnel for site safety during construction phases. This precaution would result in a temporary

disruption to any recreation and rock-hounding use along the road or at the proposed construction site locations.

- Temporary increases in noise, dust, and traffic due to construction activities and juniper removal would slightly inconvenience visitors in the project area but are not expected to impact overall recreational use in the area.
- Construction may cause temporary traffic congestion or delays along about 4 miles of the 10.6 miles of road currently used for recreation access. In addition, recreational use of the primitive campsites adjacent to the proposed access road may be avoided by campers during active construction. These delays would temporarily affect a small number of users at any given time.
- Road repairs would improve recreational access to the general Glass Butte area for some users once construction is complete.

## **DETERMINATION**

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Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, BPA determines that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA (42 USC 4321 *et seq.*). Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI for the Proposed Action.

Issued in Portland, Oregon.

/s/ Scott G. Armentrout  
Scott G. Armentrout  
Vice President  
Environment, Fish and Wildlife

February 21, 2019  
Date

**Glass Butte Communication Site  
Mitigation Action Plan**

MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION MEASURE	IMPLEMENTATION
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	
BPA will contract with each of the consulting tribes who will be responsible for the provision of a cultural monitor to be present during the ground disturbing portion of construction. A contracted archaeologist (On-Site Archaeologist) shall supervise and coordinate work with a total of up to three tribal cultural resource monitors, one from each of the consulting tribes.	Before and during construction (BPA/Contractor)
Ensure all construction employees, contractors, subcontractors, new employees, or project-associated visitors, including BPA employees, go through environmental training provided at the beginning of the project by a BPA Archaeologist, and then provided as needed by the On-Site Archaeologist. At the completion of this training a sticker to be worn on hard-hats will be provided to establish an easy system to track who has received the training. All on-site staff, with no exceptions, must complete this training.	Before and during construction (BPA/Contractor)
Train all equipment and vehicle drivers to stay on right-of-way roads and to use only identified passing, staging, and parking areas. Access to the radio site work area will be limited to required work vehicles, with all private vehicles and non-essential work vehicles to be left at the staging area off Highway 20, and project personnel commuting to the summit in as few vehicles as possible.	Before and during construction (BPA/Contractor)
The On-Site Archaeologist will be responsible for the installation of temporary protective fencing prior to any construction activities. The On-Site Archaeologist will coordinate the timing of this work with each of the tribes to allow them the opportunity to be present while the work is done and will determine where fencing should occur based on cultural resource boundaries.	During construction (Contractor)
Install signs reading, "No Project Access" along all fencing to indicate to workers that they may not go beyond fencing for any personal or work-related reason. Use T-posts with rope fencing along road edges to prevent off-road driving into cultural resource areas by project vehicles and employees.	Before and during construction (BPA/Contractor)
Do not allow surface or subsurface grading on native road surfaces within cultural resource boundaries. When road improvements other than water bars are needed within cultural resource boundaries, use gravel fill in and cap those locations. Grading may only occur on top of gravel placed on top of cultural resources within road prisms so that cultural resources are not affected.	During construction (Contractor)
Water bar and staging locations that require grading, earth moving, or subsurface construction digging shall have their adverse effects mitigated as follows: surficial artifacts shall be classified; temporally or functionally diagnostic tool artifacts will be photographed, described, and measured; the general locations of artifacts shall be noted; and if water bar locations contain artifacts these locations will be recorded with Global Positions System (GPS) equipment. Artifacts that migrate to the surface or into view during water bar construction activities will also be documented. All artifacts will be moved away from water bar locations upon the road to a natural surface location within the cultural resource boundary and this location will be documented and the location recorded with GPS equipment.	Before and during construction (Contractor)
Install a three-paneled kiosk with an overhead shade structure or roof to display relevant Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) messages to educate the public about ARPA and the importance of archaeological resources. Install the kiosk near the intersection of Highway 20 and the communication site access road right-of-way.	After construction (BPA/BLM)
<b>Visual Resources</b>	

MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION MEASURE	IMPLEMENTATION
Paint buildings a dark color to blend in with the background landform. For the BPA communications building, Cool Weathered Copper/Rawhide Ash Gray or Cool Zinc Gray color would be used.	During construction (Contractor)
Propane tanks would be screened or painted a darker color to blend in with the background landform or vegetation. Screening could be low walls, fences, or vegetation. Paint on walls or tanks would be the same colors as the buildings.	During construction (Contractor)
Use an AEP Span metal roof with a flat or low pitch roofline to reduce building height.	During construction (Contractor)
Use dark gray galvanized matte finish (not silver or shiny) for all lattice structures. Finish would be specified and verified as non-specular. Dish antennas on the lattice towers would be gray.	During construction (Contractor)
Ensure that BLM approves final colors and materials after conducting a site study for color and texture. In general, colors would be earth or vegetation toned. Approved colors apply to all structures, including buildings, roofs and galvanized attachments to the buildings such as vents. If the exposed rock face on cut slopes for the building pads are a lighter color than the surrounding landform, and create an unacceptable color contrast, an oxidizing color treatment to darken these exposed rock surfaces would be required by BLM.	Before and during construction (BPA/BLM/Contractor)
Use surface salvaged rock and brush on fill slopes and trench lines to soften the color and texture contrast. Place salvaged rocks so their previously exposed faces are up, to retain the look of the surrounding landscape. This includes all fill slopes at building pads, the top of any trenched utility lines and the side of site access roads that have been widened for project access.	During construction (Contractor)
Dispose all spoil materials off-site in appropriate locations.	During construction (Contractor)
Wildlife and Habitat	
Deer and elk winter range (which includes the entire project area) would be closed to construction activities from January 1 to April 30. Right-of-way holders could request an exemption. Exemptions would be considered depending on snow depth, temperatures, animal conditions, and other factors.	During construction (BPA/Contractor)
Minimize or avoid unnecessary ground disturbance and clearing activities.	Before and during construction (BPA/Contractor)
<i>Greater Sage-grouse</i>	
Install perch deterrents or other anti-perching devices to discourage raptors and corvids from nesting on tower.	During construction (Contractor)
Clean up refuse and eliminate food sources for sage-grouse predators.	During construction (Contractor)
Use existing roads or realignments of existing roads to the extent possible.	During and after construction (BPA/Contractor)
Design roads to an appropriate standard no higher than necessary to accommodate their intended purpose.	Before construction (BPA)
Train all personnel and contractors on sage-grouse biology, habitat requirements, and identification of local areas used by the birds.	Before and during construction (BPA/Contractor)

MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION MEASURE	IMPLEMENTATION
Power wash all vehicles and equipment involved in land and resource management activities prior to allowing them to enter the project area to minimize the introduction and spread of the invasive plant species (see additional requirements under “invasive and noxious weeds.”).	During construction (Contractor)
Use dust abatement practices on roads and pads when necessary.	During construction (Contractor)
Remove all branches on cut juniper stumps to prevent regrowth. Remove branches on cut trees that extend more than four feet above the ground or more than one foot above the general height of the sagebrush to eliminate potential perch sites for sage-grouse predators.	During construction (Contractor)
Include restoration objectives to meet sage-grouse habitat needs during reclamation. Address post-reclamation management in reclamation plan so that goals and objectives enhance and restore sage-grouse habitat.	After construction (BPA)
Restore areas at final reclamation and eliminate duplicate roads to restore the pre-disturbance landforms and desired plant community.	During and after construction (BPA/Contractor)
Restore disturbed areas at final reclamation, if necessary, to establish seedlings more quickly.	During and after construction (BPA/Contractor)
Use mulch to expedite reclamation and protect soils.	During and after construction (BPA/Contractor)
Greater Sage-grouse breeding habitat would be closed to all construction activity from March 1 to May 15 (or when no sage-grouse are attending the lek as documented by a BLM or Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Biologist) from two hours before sunset to two hours after sunrise at the perimeter of an occupied or pending lek.	During construction (Contractor)
Greater Sage-grouse brood-rearing habitat would be closed to all construction activity from July 1 to October 31.	During construction (Contractor)
Greater Sage-grouse winter habitat would be closed to all construction activities from November 1 to February 28.	During construction (Contractor)
<b>Invasive and Noxious Weeds</b>	
Utilize disposal methods of invasive plant species, such as cheatgrass, that prevent spreading or re-infestation of unwanted vegetation.	During construction (Contractor)
Thoroughly clean all vehicles, and transport equipment used in access, construction, maintenance and operations prior to moving equipment across or onto BLM managed lands. Washing and brushing equipment to remove material that can contain weed or other propagates helps insure equipment transported across or onto BLM-managed lands are weed- and weed-seed-free. Use high pressure washing to treat the insides of bumpers, wheel wells, undercarriages, inside belly plates, excavating blades, buckets, tracks, rollers, drills, buckets, shovels, any digging tools, etc., to remove potential weeds, seeds, and soil carrying weed propagules, and vegetative material.	During construction (Contractor)
In areas where activities disturb or remove vegetation, exposed soil would be minimized. A method of soil stabilization, approved by BLM, would be employed to effectively control erosion and weeds.	During construction (Contractor)
Notify BLM if noxious weed species are observed to ensure the population is recorded and to decide on method of treatment. BPA would be responsible for weed treatment within the area specified in the right-of-way grant. All treatments would adhere to federal guidelines and regulations and ensure that BLM-approved chemicals are used.	During and after construction (BPA/Contractor)

MINIMIZATION AND MITIGATION MEASURE	IMPLEMENTATION
Seed all disturbed areas with native grass species in the late fall to deter erosion and curtail the introduction of weeds. Use native varieties of BLM-certified weed-free seed, and ensure BLM staff review and approval of any seed mixture and dispersal method prior to purchase and implementation. Seeding would be evaluated after the second year's growth and repeated if necessary, as authorized by BLM staff.	During and after construction (BPA/Contractor)
<b>Recreation/Other</b>	
Place temporary notification signs (approved by BLM) at each intersection along the access road to let the public know what hours and dates construction vehicles would be operating in the area.	During construction (BPA/Contractor)
Minimize or avoid unnecessary ground disturbance and clearing activities for the communications building and radio tower.	During construction (Contractor)
Do not drain equipment oil or fuel onto the ground. Haul oil, fuel and other chemicals to an approved site for disposal. All fuel storage tanks must meet current fire department, Federal, State and local government safety and hazardous materials requirements. Follow all additional design features listed in the "Fuel tanks" section of the 2010 Glass Butte Communication Site Management Plan (USDI 2010).	During construction (Contractor)
Remove all trash from the site and dispose of properly.	During construction (Contractor)
Do not burn construction trash on public land.	During construction (Contractor)
Do not allow radio frequency emissions from communication site to exceed the applicable public safety limits, as set by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and the Federal Communications Commission.	Before and after construction (BPA)