

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Electric Lightwave Fiber Optic Cable near Columbia Substation

Project No.: F0028

Project Manager: James Hall, TPC-TPP-4

Location: Douglas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber optic cable

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow Electric Lightwave, LLC to install fiber optic cable across BPA fee-owned property adjacent to BPA's Columbia Substation in Douglas County, Washington.

Electric Lightwave would install a fiber optic cable from their regeneration hut across approximately 1,630 feet of BPA property just east of the Columbia Substation fence. The cable would be placed through roughly 275 feet of an existing BPA underground PVC conduit, and then would be strung along a Grant County Public Utility District (PUD) transmission line. Three of those transmission line structures are also located on BPA fee-owned property. Electric Lightwave's fiber optic cable would then continue off BPA property along Grant County PUD's distribution line. Because the fiber would be installed within existing conduit and on existing wood-pole structures, no ground disturbance, other than minimal construction vehicle movement, would occur on BPA property.

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, July 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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

David Evans and Associates

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 25, 2016

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

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: Electric Lightwave Fiber Optic Cable near Columbia Substation

Project Site Description

BPA’s Columbia Substation is located in central Washington in rural Douglas County. The region is characterized by an arid climate, thick basalt soil layers (up to 12,000 feet deep), steep canyons and scablands, and sagebrush and bunchgrass dominated plant communities outside of heavily farmed or grazed areas. The project area contains mollisol soils with moderately low runoff potential when thoroughly wet.

The Columbia Substation is situated on a terrace in T21N R22E Sec 21 and 22. It is immediately surrounded by a railroad and the Columbia River downhill and to the west, and row-crop agriculture fields on all other sides. HWY 28 runs north-south approximately 0.5 miles east of the substation, and a checkerboard of public and private lands surround this general area where Kittitas, Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties meet.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No potential to affect historic or cultural resources due to negligible amount of ground disturbance. Furthermore, past cultural surveys within this project’s APE have determined there is not a potential to impact intact cultural remains.</p>		
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance proposed; minimal soil disturbance expected due construction vehicles off access roads.</p>		
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special status species present. Approximately ¼ acre of grasses and shrubs (mostly non-native or invasive species) may be temporarily disturbed by vehicles and fiber pulling equipment traveling off established access roads.</p>		
<p>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special status species or designated critical habitat present. Approximately ¼ acre of low-quality habitat typical of the area would be temporarily disturbed during construction activities.</p>		

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



Explanation:

The project area does not have any water bodies, floodplains or listed fish species. A perennial man-made reservoir for irrigation purposes is approximately 800 feet southeast of the project area, and a perennial stream flows downhill and west into the Columbia River, away from the project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation:

No wetlands present within 0.5 miles of the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation:

No groundwater or aquifers present, no ground disturbance proposed.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation:

No change to land use proposed.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation:

No change in visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation:

Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

No impact to human health and safety.

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, if necessary:

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

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA owns the property in fee; surrounding landowners would not be affected.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill, ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: January 25, 2016