

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Echo Lake – Monroe Transmission Line Verizon Wireless Proposed Projects (W0370 Lake Margaret and W0371 Stillwater-Kelly)

Project Numbers: W0370 and W0371

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TEP-TPP-1

Location: King County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action:

Lake Margaret Proposed Project W0370

BPA proposes to allow Verizon Wireless to collocate communication equipment and appurtenances on and around structure 19/3 on the Echo Lake – Monroe transmission line. Verizon proposes to install 12 new panel antennas (8 in. by 12 in. by 98 in.) and 24 coaxial cables to the existing 126 ft 4 in. tall BPA steel lattice tower. The antennas would be mounted to the top of the structure, so the antenna tip height would be approximately 135 ft. above the ground. Due to the steep terrain, a horizontal steel platform would be affixed to the tower legs to create a flat surface (under the tower), upon which six equipment cabinets would be located. Verizon Wireless requests a lease area of approximately 20 ft. by 25 ft. around the tower that is dominated by blackberry bushes and native and non-native grasses. Verizon would construct a fence on the steel platform (under the tower) to contain 12 remote radio units. Three surge protectors would be mounted to the fence and a GPS antenna would be mounted to the existing ice bridge post. Furthermore, new underground utilities would be installed approximately 36 in. below grade and would run from the new wireless equipment, parallel to an existing dirt access road, to a dedicated transformer approximately 310 ft. away from structure 19/3, outside of the BPA right-of-way (ROW). Landscaping and a small retaining wall immediately adjacent to the tower may be added to the project later, and have been taken into consideration under this CX determination.

Stillwater-Kelly Proposed Project W0371

BPA proposes to allow Verizon Wireless to collocate communication equipment and appurtenances on and around structure 16/4 on the Echo Lake–Monroe transmission line. Verizon proposes to install 12 new panel antennas (8 in. by 12 in. by 98 in.) and 24 coaxial cables to the existing 130-foot tall BPA steel lattice tower. The antennas would be mounted to the top of the structure, so the antenna tip height would be approximately 139 ft. above the ground. Due to the steep terrain, a horizontal steel platform would be affixed to the tower legs, to create a flat surface under the tower, upon which six equipment cabinets would be located. Verizon Wireless requests a lease area of approximately 20 ft. by 35 ft. around the tower that is dominated by blackberry bushes and native and non-native grasses. Verizon would construct a fence on the steel platform (under the tower) to contain 12 remote radio units and three surge protectors. A GPS antenna would be mounted to the fence. Furthermore, new underground utilities would be installed approximately 36 in. below grade and would run from the new

wireless equipment, parallel to an existing dirt access road, to a dedicated transformer approximately 240 ft. away from structure 16/4, outside of the BPA ROW. Landscaping and a small retaining wall immediately adjacent to the tower may be added to the project later, and have been taken into consideration under this CX determination.

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
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 9, 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 to environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Echo Lake – Monroe Transmission Line Verizon Wireless Proposed Projects (W0370 Lake Margaret and W0371 Stillwater-Kelly)

Project Site Description

Both proposed project sites are located in western Washington, approximately 20 miles east-northeast of Seattle. This region is characterized by rolling lowlands, mild maritime climate, rain shadow precipitation from the Olympic Mountains, and forests dominated by conifer species. This valley seems to be dominated by private ownership, with sparsely scattered rural residences. Agriculture and timber harvest do not seem to be prominent land use practices in the area. Vegetation at each site is primarily native and non-native grasses and blackberry bushes.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> WA DAHP concurred with BPA's determination that no historic properties would likely be affected as a result of this project on January 4, 2016. No response was received from the consulted Muckleshoot, Puyallup, and Snoqualmie tribes. The utility trenching paths to the dedicated transformers were added to both areas of potential effect (APE) maps on March 25, 2016; however, the BPA archaeologist determined that re-initiation of consultation would not be required.</p> <p>At the Lake Margaret site, the trenching of conduit to the transformer would take place under the existing NE Cherry Valley Road. Due to the construction of the road, the likelihood of any intact subsurface deposits is extremely low and the trench depth of 36 inches means that work is likely to take place in road base and fill soils. The rest of the revised APE was previously surveyed and concurred on by WA DAHP.</p> <p>At the Stillwater-Kelly site, the likelihood of intact subsurface deposits is extremely low. The rest of the revised APE has already been surveyed and concurred on by WA DAHP.</p> <p>Should cultural deposits be encountered during construction, work shall halt immediately, and the BPA archaeologist should be notified.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> For each project, 36 in. deep trenches (310 ft. long at Lake Margaret and approximately 240 ft. long at Stillwater-Kelly) are proposed for utility cables to connect the wireless equipment to the dedicated transformers outside of the BPA ROW. Soils in the region are Tokull gravelly loam. The topography slope is approximately 6 to 15 percent slope at the Lake Margaret site and 30 to 35 percent slope at the Stillwater-Kelly site. The soil type found in this area has moderately high runoff potential when thoroughly wet, and water transmission through the soil is somewhat restricted. Although the slopes are relatively steep, there is adequate vegetation material to capture runoff materials before entering the roadside ditch.</p>		

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)

Explanation: No special-status species present. Vegetation species potentially disturbed as a result of these proposed projects include, but are not limited to: blackberry, native and non-native grasses, and bracken ferns. Vegetation between the tower legs would likely experience shading due to the installation of the new horizontal steel platforms.

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

Explanation: No special-status species present, and no designated critical habitat within the project area. Approximately 0.5 acre of low quality habitat would be altered at Lake Margaret and 0.36 acre of low quality habitat would be altered at Stillwater-Kelly as a result of this proposed project.

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

Explanation: There are no waterbodies in the proposed project areas and they both lay outside of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Q3 floodplain area.

The nearest waterbodies to the Lake Margaret site (structure 19/3) are a freshwater pond approximately 0.5 mile south of the project area and the North Fork Cherry Creek approximately 1,250 feet north.

The nearest waterbodies to the Stillwater-Kelly site (structure 16/4) is a swamp/marsh approximately 423 feet west and Harris Creek approximately 560 feet west. Two major roads and a residence lay between the tower and these waterbodies.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands present in the proposed project areas. The nearest wetland to the Lake Margaret site is a freshwater emergent wetland and is approximately 1,850 feet to the west. A small rock quarry and heavily forested parcel of land lay between the proposed project area and the wetland.

The nearest wetland, a freshwater forested/shrub wetland, to the Stillwater-Kelly site (structure 16/4) is approximately 370 feet west; however, two major roads and a residence lay between the tower and wetland.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The proposed trench would not exceed 36-inches deep. This depth is not expected to impact groundwater resources in the region.

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

Explanation: There is no change to land use proposed, and the proposed project area is not a specially designated area. Upon project completion, trenched areas would be returned to pre-construction BPA ROW land use.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Twelve new (98 inch tall) antenna panels would be installed on top the existing towers in a vertical array, which would extend the tower heights by approximately 8.5 feet. Although the new structure heights would be taller with the antennas, they would not be significantly different or noticeable considering the overall height of the structure prior to the antenna installation.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise from equipment cabinets and antennas would not be noticeably different from current ambient noise levels in the area.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact.

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: Coordinated with Verizon Wireless's consultant to obtain right-of-entry forms to gain access to private property outside the BPA ROW where utility trenching to dedicated transformers would occur.

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

Date: June 8, 2016

Becky Hill, ECT-4

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC