

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY16 Ross District Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacements

**PP&A No.:** 3460

**Project Manager:** Gary Beck TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Columbia and Multnomah counties, Oregon, and Clark County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace 22 deteriorating wood-pole structures along the transmission lines referenced in table below. Replacement would be in-kind and would utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger will be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement.

Minor road and landing maintenance is scheduled to be performed at select wood pole replacement structures. Access road work will take place in the existing road prism and will be limited to minor blading, grading and rocking of specific segments that have become impassable.

Transmission Line ROW	Structure	Township	Range	Section	County/State	Ownership/Land Use
Allston-Driscoll No. 2	3/2	7N	3W	15	Columbia County, OR	Commercial Forestry
	9/2, 9/3, 9/6	7N	4W	15	Columbia County, OR	Commercial Forestry
Ross-Carborundum No. 1	4/5, 5/1, 5/2, 5/3	2N	1E	13	Clark County, WA	Port of Vancouver
St. Helens-Allston No. 1	3/2, 3/3	4N	1W	5	Columbia County, OR	Residential
	3/4, 3/5	5N	1W	32	Columbia County, OR	Residential
	5/2, 6/5, 7/3	5N	1W	17, 29	Columbia County, OR	Commercial Forestry
	11/2	6N	2W	25	Columbia County, OR	Rural Residential
	19/6, 20/3	7N	2W	17, 21	Columbia County, OR	Rural Residential

St. Johns-St. Helens No. 1	8/7, 8/9	2N	2W	12	Multnomah County, OR	Rural Residential
	14/1	3N	2W	14	Multnomah County, OR	Rural Residential
	20/4	4N	2W	11	Multnomah County, OR	Rural Residential

**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/ Benjamin Tilley  
Benjamin J. Tilley  
Natural Resource Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason  
Stacy L. Mason

Date: June 23, 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:** Ross District FY16 Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacements

## Project Site Description

All work will be within existing BPA transmission line rights-of-way that cross commercial forestry and rural residential properties. The four structures on the Ross-Carborundum No. 1 line are adjacent to Vancouver Lake on property owned by the Port of Vancouver, which is primarily maintained grass and shrubs.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Washington DAHP (Log No.: 2016-02-01037-BPA) concurred on April 28, 2016, and Oregon SHPO (Case No. 16-0334) concurred on May 31, 2016, that implementation will result in no historic properties affected. In the unlikely event an archaeological object or site (i.e., historic or prehistoric) is encountered during project implementation, all ground disturbance at the location should cease immediately until a professional archaeologist can be contacted to evaluate the discovery.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u> A cultural monitor will be present for work performed at two work sites on the Ross-Carborundum No. 1.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area is in a previously disturbed right-of-way within the existing transmission line corridor. The ground disturbance for the wood pole replacements expected is that typically associated with removing a 2-pole transmission line support structure and guy-anchors (.05 acre) and installation of the replacement poles (.04 acre). No prime or unique farmlands will be affected.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no federally-listed plant species or designated critical habitat present at or adjacent to the project area. State special-status species present near the project area include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fungus (<i>Balsamia alba</i>) – last observed in 1969.</li> </ol> <p>Due to the time period from last observation and the infrequency of observations, there is very little potential for the plants to occur in the planned disturbance footprint.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no federally-listed plant species or designated critical habitat present at or adjacent to the project area. State special-status species present near the project area include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purple Martin – last observed 1965; several nests located in snags (St. Helens-Allston No. 1- 3/2, 3/3, ¾, 3/5, 5/2).</li> <li>2. Purple Martin – last observed 1985; nests in boxes provided by ODFW (St. Johns-St. Helens No. 1 – 8/7, 8/9)</li> </ol> <p>Due to the time period from last observation and the infrequency of observations, there is very little potential for the wildlife to occur in the planned disturbance footprint.</p>		

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

Explanation: Structure 9/6 on the Allston-Driscoll No. 1 is within 100 feet of the Clatskanie River, which contains Lower Columbia Chinook Salmon and critical habitat, as well as Coho salmon presence per ODFW. Structures 4/5, 5/1, 5/2, and 5/3 on the Ross-Carborundum No. 1 line are adjacent to Vancouver Lake.

Mitigation: No road or landing work is required at these locations. All areas are currently maintained grasses and shrubs with easy access to the work site. Typical erosion control BMPs (i.e silt fencing, revegetation of disturbed areas) will be implemented and no riparian habitat will be affected.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands are identified within any of the project work sites. BMP's employed in #5 above would minimize or prevent any potential runoff that could compromise water quality.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The proposed work is not anticipated to impact groundwater. Disturbance from the project work would be physical in nature with no potential contaminants other than vehicular fluids that could possibly leak on-site. Spill kits will be in every vehicle and piece of work equipment present at all work locations.

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

Explanation: Land use along this line corridor is predominately commercial forest lands and rural residential properties. The structures on the Ross-Carborundum line are adjacent to Vancouver Lake, within a public recreation area owned by the Port of Vancouver. The project will not alter the appearance or function of the land at the work site.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The wood pole structures would be in-kind replacements of poles of the same size, shape, and location. Some minor rocking of the landing areas at some locations would be typical of disturbance expected with maintenance work. The visual impact of the overall project would be short-lived and would blend in quickly with the surrounding configurations.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Work activities for this project are maintenance-level in nature and should be completed in a short time period with minimal crews and machinery, resulting in exhaust fumes and potentially dust during dry periods. Dust control measures will be used if necessary.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise will occur from work activities during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions exist at identified work sites. A site-specific safety plan or Job Hazard Analysis will be developed and approved by BPA prior to work commencing. Daily job briefings will occur prior to work initiation each day to assure an overview of all potential hazards involved for that work day.

### 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:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Private property owners have been notified via local public notification. Identified concerns will be addressed and mitigations implemented prior to project initiation.

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

Signed: /s/ Benjamin J. Tilley  
Benjamin J. Tilley, EP-Alvey

Date: June 23, 2016