

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Olympia District, Pacific County 2016 Priority Pole Replacements

Project Manager: Jim Semrau, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Pacific County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace ten and remove one wood pole transmission line structures on the Naselle-Tarlett No. 1, Naselle-Tarlett No. 2, and Raymond-Willapa River No.1 transmission lines in Pacific County, Washington; which is in BPA's Olympia Maintenance District. For nine structures, the work would include removing deteriorating wood poles, hardware, insulators, and guy wires and replacing in-kind in the same location. One structure, 11/4 would be re-engineered and moved 440 feet back on line to a higher location out of the tidally-influenced wetland and flood plain. Structure 11/5 would be removed from the wetland and no replacement structure would be required.

In addition, the project includes minor improvements to existing road surfaces and landings (blading and rocking) to safely accommodate work vehicles. One new small access spur and landing would be developed to gain access to the new 11/4 structure location.

See table below for structure names and locations on the transmission lines.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure(s)	Township	Range	Section
Naselle-Tarlett No. 1	3/5, 3/6	11N	9W	31
	11/4, 11/5, 11/6, 12/1,12/3	10N	10W	8
Naselle-Tarlett No. 2	17/10	10N	11W	11
Raymond-Willapa River No.1	1/3, 1/8	14N	9W	12
	3/5	14N	9W	23

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.

Phil Smith, for
Greg Tippetts EPR/Olympia
Olympia District Environmental Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: July 14, 2016
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

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.

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Project Site Description

All work would be done in existing managed right-of-way. The underlying property ownership includes; Willapa National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS), private agricultural lands, and private timber lands.

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> A cultural resources survey and Section 106 consultation were completed for the project APEs. No resources were identified in the vicinity of the proposed work areas. Washington DAHP agreed with a no effects determination from a survey report on June 13, 2016, Log No.: 2016-03-01670-BPA. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological resources (BPA and WA DAHP) would be contacted.</p>		
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All but one of the new structures would be installed in the same location and minimal new excavation would be required. Typically, wood poles are installed to a depth of 8- to 12-feet dependent on the pole dimensions and soil conditions. Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. Storm water BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues.</p>		
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. No special-status species are present. One new small access spur and landing would be developed to gain access to the new 11/4 structure location. The site would be restored with native grasses following construction.</p>		
<p>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A no effect determination for T&E species and critical habitats was completed for the project. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor with little wildlife habitat; no special-status species or critical habitats would be affected.</p>		

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



Explanation: Structures 3/5, 3/6, 11/4, 11/5, and 12/3 of the Nasselle-Tarlett No. 1 are currently located within tidally-influenced floodplains. A tidal channel listed as essential fish habitat for coho salmon is located between structures 11/4 and 11/5. Structures 11/4 and 11/5 would be removed with no replacements in the floodplain. Structure 11/4 would be moved 440 feet back online at a location out of the floodplain. Professionally-engineered timber wetland mats would be used to access the work locations and span the channel that restricts access to 11/5. Structures 3/5, 3/6, and 12/3 would be accessed by existing roads and would be replaced in kind. Appropriate storm water BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues. Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. All other work locations are not located near any waterbodies, floodplains, or fish habitat.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Structures 11/4, 11/5 and 12/3 of the Nasselle-Tarlett No. 1 are currently located within a tidally-influenced wetland. Structures 11/4 and 11/5 would be removed with no replacements in the wetland. The structures would be cut off just below ground level and removed with a crane to reduce excavation impacts to the wetland. Structure 11/4 would be moved 440 feet back online out of the wetland. Structure 12/3 would be replaced in the same location. Professionally-engineered and installed timber wetland mats would be used to access the work locations.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface. All spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

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



Explanation: The project locations are confined to the existing transmission line ROW corridors. Underlying and surrounding lands are USFWS Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, private agricultural lands, and private timber use lands. Structures 11/4, 11/5, 11/6, 12/1, and 12/3 occur on the USFWS Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge staff have been involved throughout the project planning and are in agreement with the project. Project locations do not include any specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Proposed action at existing facilities would not alter or effect visual quality. Structure replacements are in-kind and would not be visibly different than existing structures.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project has a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: The project is located away from any populated areas and places of residence. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Completion of this project would increase system stability and reliability to the service area.

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: Notifications via mailed letters have been sent to all current landowners approximately 3-8 weeks prior to project initiation. The letters provide contact information for BPA to allow feedback from landowners/managers concerning the proposed project.

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

Signed: Phil Smith, for Date: July 14, 2016
Greg Tippetts KEPR/Olympia
Olympia District Environmental Scientist