

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Naselle-Tarlette No. 1 (retired section) Pole Removal, 2016

Project Manager: Chad Hamel, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Pacific County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.10: Removal of electric transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to remove and dispose of abandoned wood pole transmission line structures and or structural components; swamp braces, guy wires, anchors, etc., from 27 sites along the abandoned sections of the Naselle-Tarlette No. 1 transmission line in Pacific County, Washington; which is in BPA's Olympia Maintenance District.

See table below for project locations.

| Transmission Line | Project Section | Township | Range | Section | Land Use |
|---|-----------------|----------|-------|---------|-----------------------|
| Naselle-Tarlett No. 1 (abandoned sections) | Section 1 | 11N | 10W | 25 | Agriculture/Tidelands |
| | Section 1 | 11N | 9W | 31 | Tidelands |
| | Section 2 | 10N | 10W | 6 | USFWS, |
| | Section 2 | 10N | 10W | 7 | Willapa National |
| | Section 2 | 10N | 11W | 11 | Wildlife Refuge |

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/ Phil Smith, for

Greg Tippetts EPR/Olympia

Olympia District Environmental Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Date: July 18, 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 an abandoned right-of-way that consists of tidally-influenced marshy grasslands. The underlying property ownership includes; Willapa National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS), private agricultural, and private tidelands.

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> 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 May 23, 2016, Log No.: 080415-13-BPA. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological entities (BPA and WA DAHP) would be contacted.</p> | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> All of the structures will be cut off just below ground level and felled. Pole pieces will be flown out by helicopter. No heavy equipment will be used to access the sites or to remove the structures. Minimal hand digging around the structures would occur in the localized pole areas to gain access below the surface. Removed soil will be replaced.</p> | | |
| 3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> Work would occur in areas historically used as open transmission line corridor. No ground-disturbing activities are planned for this project. No special-status species are present.</p> | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <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 historically used as open transmission line corridor; no special-status species or critical habitats would be affected. The work is being completed in July to avoid potential disturbances to migratory waterfowl caused by use of the helicopter.</p> | | |

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



Explanation: All of the structures and components of structures are located within tidally-influenced marshy grasslands and floodplain. Crews would access the work sites on foot. All of the structures would be cut off just below ground level and felled. Pole pieces and components would be flown out by helicopter. No heavy equipment would be used to access the sites or to remove the structures. Minimal hand digging around the structures would occur in the localized pole areas to gain access below the surface. Removed soil will be replaced. Crews would work during periods of low tide minimizing the potential for interaction with fish species.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: All of the structures and components of structures are located within tidally-influenced marshy grasslands. Crews would access the work sites on foot. All of the structures would be cut off just below ground level and felled. Pole pieces and components would be flown out by helicopter. No heavy equipment would be used to access the sites or to remove the structures. Minimal hand digging around the structures would occur in the localized pole areas to gain access below the surface. Removed soil will be replaced.

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. No excavation is proposed for this project. 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 an abandoned transmission line ROW. Underlying and surrounding lands are USFWS Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, private agricultural lands, and private tidelands. Several of the areas with old wood pole structure components proposed for removal occur on the USFWS Willapa National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge staff have been involved throughout the project planning and support the project. Project locations do not include any specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project is to remove abandoned wood pole transmission line structures from a historical ROW. Removing the derelict structures will return the sites to a more natural state.

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 heavily populated areas. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities and helicopter usage. The disturbance would be for a short duration and would occur during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: This project would have no impact on human health and safety of the general public.

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 three to eight 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: */s/ Phil Smith, for* Date: *July 18, 2016*
Greg Tippetts EPR/Olympia
Olympia District Environmental Scientist