

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fiber Optic Cable Installation at Maupin Substation

Project Numbers: LURR 20160281 and F0033

Project Manager: James Hall, TPC-TPP-4

Location: Wasco County, Oregon

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 LS Networks (LSN) to install new fiber optic cable on BPA fee-owned property associated with the Maupin Substation, located 2.1 miles east of Maupin, Oregon.

Directional boring for the new conduit and fiber optic cable would begin on privately owned land located south of Bakeoven Road and the Maupin Substation. The directional bore would travel north under Bakeoven Road and enter the BPA fee-owned property approximately 70 ft. southeast of the fenced Electric Lightwave LLC (ELI) regeneration site. The bore would already be underground at a depth of 30 to 36 in. when it enters the BPA parcel of land.

The underground directional boring would travel north on BPA property to a location approximately 10 ft. southeast of the southeast corner of the ELI regeneration site's chain-link fence. At this location, a new launch bore pit (approximately 6 ft. by 6 ft. by 6 ft.) would be excavated with a backhoe, and a new 4 ft. by 4 ft. by 4 ft. customer vault (CV) would be installed (CV-2). From CV-2, the directional boring would continue north, paralleling Maupin Substation's east fence line, to a location approximately 3 ft. south of an existing ELI vault (MAUP1CV) where a receiving pit (6 ft. by 6 ft. by 6 ft.) would be excavated. The newly installed conduit, totaling approximately 620 ft. in length, would be spliced into existing conduit at MAUP1CV.

LSN also proposes to install new fiber optic cable in approximately 460 ft. of existing conduit running northwest from MAUP1CV to BPA's vault (BV-8). BV-8 is located approximately 100 ft. north of the BPA fee-owned property line in a BPA transmission corridor easement.

Slurry from boring activities would be removed by a vacuum truck. No chemicals would be used for slurry extraction. Construction vehicles and equipment would be staged in the existing Maupin Substation gravel parking lot. OMNI marker balls would be installed approximately 24 in. deep along the new conduit's alignment at 40 to 50 ft. increments, and at every corner along its path.

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/ Gene Lynard for
Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ David K. Kennedy for
Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 1, 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: Fiber Optic Cable Installation at Maupin Substation

Project Site Description

The proposed project area is located on a BPA fee-owned parcel of land associated with the Maupin Substation, approximately 2.1 miles east of the city of Maupin and the Deschutes River, in Wasco County, Oregon.

The substation property is located in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion, characterized by arid sagebrush steppe and grassland habitat. Sagebrush and bunchgrass dominate the vegetation composition immediately surrounding the Maupin Substation, and much of the ground is bare earth. A portion of this BPA fee-owned parcel is used for livestock grazing, as is much of the landscape in this remote and rural area. Residences are sparsely scattered, and irrigated agriculture is rare east of the Deschutes River in this region.

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> The proposed project area was previously surveyed in 2014 as part of BPA’s Maupin to Tygh Valley #1 Rebuild. No cultural resources were identified in or near this project’s Area of Potential Effect during the 2014 survey. Soil test pits dug near the substation at that time produced negative results.</p> <p>A phase I survey was conducted in 2014 by HRA for BPA’s ongoing PDCI project, which covered the other surrounding areas at the substation as well as areas to the north and south of the project. No cultural material was found in the immediate vicinity. No new cultural material has been found in this area during the construction phase of PDCI in 2015.</p> <p>After examining previous survey results and checking the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office database, the project archaeologist determined that Section 106 consultation was not needed for this project, as it would not affect any known cultural resources and the likelihood of subsurface deposits was low.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area is located on a relatively flat landform (2 to 12 percent slope) and contains Condon silt loam. These soils have moderately high runoff potential when thoroughly wet. Best management practices (BMPs) to avoid potential erosion and to control sedimentation would be implemented.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present and no federally-listed plant species observed within 10 miles of the project area. Existing vegetation observed within the project area include sagebrush, bunchgrass, Russian thistle tumbleweed, lupine species, common yarrow, and mullein.</p>		

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



Explanation: No special-status species present and no federally-listed wildlife species observed within 10 miles of the project area.

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



Explanation: The following are designated freshwater critical habitats (DFCH) found within 5 miles of the project area: Deschutes River, Bakeoven Creek, Trail Hollow Creek, Booten Creek, Stag Canyon, Robin Creek, and Buck Hollow Creek. These waterbodies are DFCH because federally-threatened steelhead and bull trout may use them during their lifecycle. Of these waterbodies, Buck Hollow Creeks is the closest at 1.5 miles away from the project area. Best management practices to avoid erosion and control sedimentation into the roadside drainage ditch will be implemented.

Due to the distance between the project area and the DFCH, and the implementation of BMPs, the proposed project activities would not have an effect on federally-threatened species or their aquatic habitats.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands or waterways present within the project area. The closest wetland is greater than 0.6 mile southeast of the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: All proposed ground disturbance activities are not expected to impact groundwater resources in the region. The nearest EPA Region 10 sole source aquifer is over 60 miles away.

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



Explanation: There would be no permanent changes to land use at this location.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Most project-related activities would occur below ground. The new vault (CV-2) would be the only long-term visible change within the project area when project activities are complete. Two feet of the new vault will be below ground, so only 2 ft. of its 4 ft. of height would be visible above ground.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to short-term construction activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not be noticeable.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact to health or human 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: The proposed project area is located on BPA fee-owned property.

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

Signed: /s/ Gene Lynard for
Becky Hill, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: August 1, 2016