

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 Structure 4/2 Replacement

Project Manager: Lisa A. Casey, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Yamhill County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace structure 4/2 on the Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 transmission line, located on the Siuslaw National Forest in southwest Yamhill County, Oregon. The existing wooden three-pole structure is at risk of failure due to age and deterioration of the guy wire anchors. Replacement of the transmission structure and guy wires is required to ensure safe and reliable electrical transmission.

BPA would remove two of the three wooden poles that constitute the existing three-pole structure and would install new poles in the same locations and holes. Existing guy wire anchors would be cut off at-grade and retired in place, and six new screw anchors and associated guy wires would be installed approximately 25 to 28 feet from the base of the wooden poles. BPA would also replace jumpers, insulators, and other associated electrical components. The project would require the use of light-duty vehicles, heavy equipment (i.e., backhoe, boom truck and bucket truck), and power tools. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored on-site and then used for backfill. Heavy equipment would be operated on the existing access roads and gravel landing, and no new access roads or landings would be required. Equipment would not access areas off the existing access roads or landing. Following construction, ongoing operation and maintenance of the transmission line would not change from current conditions. Construction would require no more than one week to complete and is scheduled for late Summer 2021 or early Fall 2021.

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, Jul. 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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

August 18, 2021

Katey C. Grange

Date

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.

Proposed Action: Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 Structure 4/2 Replacement

Project Site Description

The project site is located entirely within BPA's existing Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 transmission line right-of-way (ROW) easement on the U.S. Forest Service's Siuslaw National Forest in southwest Yamhill County, Oregon (Township 5 South, Range 9 West, Section 35). Structure 4/2 is located on an upland terrace approximately 50 feet northeast of Sawgrass Creek and approximately 150 feet northwest of Three Rivers Highway. The majority of the project site consists of existing gravel access roads and a landing pad, with some low-growing native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species, including western sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), and Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). Outside of the ROW, the surrounding area is primarily undeveloped forest with a fragmented patchwork of recently logged areas and timber stands (predominantly western hemlock [*Tsuga heterophylla*] and Douglas fir [*Pseudotsuga menziesii*]) of varying age classes.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On December 23, 2020, BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties:

- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
- U.S. Forest Service – Siuslaw National Forest

BPA conducted background research and a field survey of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 transmission line is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP). In addition, one pre-contact site (OR2021025-1) was identified during the field survey, a portion of which overlaps with the APE. BPA considers site OR2021025-1 eligible for inclusion in the NHRP. Following identification of site OR2021025-1, a BPA transmission line maintenance crew, unaware of the site's existence, expanded the existing gravel landing in preparation for the structure 4/2 replacement. The landing expansion covered a portion of site OR2021025-1.

The proposed structure 4/2 replacement would be an in-kind repair and replacement, which would not adversely affect the historic integrity of the Boyer-Tillamook No. 1 transmission line. Furthermore, given the disturbed context and limited number of artifacts represented in the portion of site OR2021025-1 that overlaps the APE, BPA has determined that the structure 4/2 replacement would have no adverse effect on site OR2021025-1.

Therefore, BPA determined that the initial landing expansion caused an adverse effect to historic properties: the previously unrecorded site OR2021025-1. However the proposed structure 4/2 replacement would result in no adverse effect to historic properties (BPA CR Project No.: OR 2021 025; SHPO Case No.: 20-1630). The Siuslaw National Forest concurred with BPA's determination on June 24, 2021. No other comments were received.

Notes:

- Install new transmission poles in the same holes as existing transmission poles.
- Cut off existing guy wire anchors at-grade and retire the remaining in-ground portions of the anchors in place.
- Install screw anchors for the new guy wires.
- Limit the operation of heavy equipment to the existing gravel access roads and landing pad.
- Buffer and mark the boundaries of site OR2021025-1 as areas to avoid to ensure the site is not impacted.
- Ensure that an archaeological monitor is present during all ground-disturbing activities at the site.
- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor ground disturbance around the base of the existing transmission structure. Although heavy equipment would be operated on the existing access roads and landing pad, some minor soil compaction could occur.

Notes:

- Install new transmission poles in the same holes as existing transmission poles.
- Cut off existing guy wire anchors at-grade and retire the remaining in-ground portions of the anchors in place.
- Install screw anchors for the new guy wires.
- Limit the operation of heavy equipment to the existing gravel access roads and landing pad.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: The proposed action could crush or remove vegetation around the base of the existing transmission structure. The extent of vegetation removal would be minimal and disturbed areas would naturally revegetate soon after completion of the project.

There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species projected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) near the project site, and no such species or suitable habitat were observed during a site visit in February 2021. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species or habitats.

Notes:

- Wash vehicles and equipment prior to mobilization to the project site and after completion of construction to remove all soil and vegetative material and prevent the spread of noxious weeds.
- Crush rather than remove existing vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project site is located within marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) and northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) designated critical habitat. Both species are listed as threatened under the Federal ESA. The proposed action would create noise and disturbance that “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls, if present. Furthermore, the proposed action would cause “no adverse modification” of designated critical habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with this determination on June 7, 2021.

Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, the proposed action would be short in duration and would not result in permanent alteration of habitat.

Notes:

- Ensure that no work occurs between April 1 and August 5.
- Ensure that work occurs no earlier than two hours after dawn and no later than two hours before dusk. Sunrise and sunset times for the Siuslaw National Forest can be found at: <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/@9409737>

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Sawgrass Creek is located approximately 50 feet from the project site. Sawgrass Creek supports Oregon Coast coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), which is an evolutionarily significant unit listed as threatened under the Federal ESA. There is no coho salmon designated critical habitat near the project site.

No in-water work would be required and no work would occur within a floodplain. The proposed action would result in minimal ground disturbance and would not have the potential to indirectly impact Sawgrass Creek through erosion and sedimentation. Therefore, the proposed action would have no impact on water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation for removal and replacement of the transmission structure poles is unlikely to reach depths to groundwater and no new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The existing transmission structure poles and associated guy wires would be replaced within the existing transmission line right-of-way. Therefore, there would be no change in land use and no impact to specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The existing transmission structure poles and associated guy wires would be replaced within the existing transmission line right-of-way. Therefore, there would be no change in visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and localized dust and emissions from use of vehicles, heavy equipment, and power tools would temporarily impact air quality during construction. There would be no permanent change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and localized noise would temporarily increase from use of vehicles, heavy equipment, and power tools and periods of human activity during construction. There would be no permanent change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be completed by transmission line maintenance professionals trained in proper techniques and equipment use. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. Therefore, no impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of the proposed action.

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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The proposed action would be carried out within BPA's existing transmission line right-of-way easement, which is located on the Siuslaw National Forest. BPA has notified the US Forest Service of the proposed action. No further landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette August 18, 2021
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
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