

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Martin Creek-Drain No.1 Urgent Pole Replacement of Structures 9/5 and 11/6

PP&A No.: 4849

Project Manager: Rusty Ludt, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Douglas County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace the wood pole structures located at 9/5 and 11/6 on the Martin Creek-Drain No.1 transmission line. During inspection, these two structures were found to have substantial defects that could result in risk to human safety and system reliability, and must be replaced. The damaged wood poles would be replaced in-kind, using the same wood pole type, material and hardware. The structures would be replaced in the same hole. Structure 11/6 would require a new road approximately 200 feet in length and 10 feet wide be constructed to access the structure. The road would be cut with a bull dozer and excavator. The road surface would be bladed as is with no rock aggregate used. Twelve trees would need to be removed ranging from 4 to 8 inches in diameter. Two landings 40 feet by 40 feet would be constructed at the base of structure 11/6 to allow for equipment to replace the wood structures and provide for future maintenance.

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/ Aaron Shurtliff
Aaron Shurtliff
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey C. Grange Date: August 17, 2022
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

The project site is located in a hilly forested area with miscellaneous hardwood and conifer species. The nearest water resource to the project is a stream about 400 feet from structure 11/6.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On July 13, 2022, BPA initiated consultation with The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (Grand Ronde), the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Oregon, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. A field survey was conducted on July 14, and no resources were identified. On July 25, BPA received concurrence from SHPO that the project would have no effect to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would result in some minor excavation to remove the wood poles and replace with new ones. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored onsite, backfilled, and then graded to original contours. Construction of a new road to structure 11/6 and landing would involve some blading that would disturb the top layer of soil.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some vegetation would be removed including twelve trees between 4 and 8 inches in diameter. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. It is anticipated that reseedling would not be necessary since vegetation removal would be limited to a few small trees and the small road and landing construction would be graveled.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies in the project area. The nearest water body is a stream about 400 feet from structure 11/6.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands located within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Groundwater would not be impacted because the nearest waterbody is 400 feet away down gradient from the project area, which is on a hill, and excavation would be limited to the top several inches of soil for the new road, and up to 10 feet for the new pole. It is expected that ground water would be well below the proposed excavation depth.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not change existing land use nor is the project within a specially-designated area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The wood pole structure would be replaced in-kind and would not change the existing visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project site, and there would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work crews would follow appropriate safety precautions. Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

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 work would occur on BPA's existing easements on private property. Project activities would be coordinated with the landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Shurtliff
Aaron Shurtliff
Environmental Engineer

Date: August 17, 2022