

Categorical Exclusion Determination
Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Targhee – Drummond Transmission Line Landings Improvement Project

PP&A No.: 4862

Project Manager: Joseph Barnett – TFIF – Idaho Falls

Location: Fremont County, Idaho

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 improve existing landings at structures 26/4 and 26/8 on the Targhee-Drummond transmission line in the Idaho Falls TLM District. The proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line structures which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. Improvements to existing landings to include grading and gravel placement within the existing foot print.

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/ Frederick Walasavage
Frederick Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel Date: August 29, 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.

Proposed Action: Targhee – Drummond Transmission Line Landings Improvement project

The project activities would be conducted on BPA transmission line rights-of-way. The sites are located on private lands. Adjacent land uses primarily consist of agriculture and range. The project area is flat lands. Vegetation consists of grasses. There are no waterbodies or wetlands within any notable distances from work areas.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure	Township	Range	Section
Targhee – Drummond	24/6, 24/8	8N	3E	36

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist completed background research of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and determined the project actions would result in No Historic Properties Affected. Background research indicated that there are six previously conducted surveys within one mile of the APE, one of which was conducted within the APE itself. However, none of these surveys identified any cultural resources within one mile of the APE. Given that the project would have a maximum depth of 6 inches, which is well within the plow zone of the active agricultural land, the project would not impact any previously undisturbed land, thus not affecting any historic properties.

Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the Environmental Protection Specialist should be notified immediately. No additional review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required for this action at this time.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All landing work would be in existing footprints. Localized soil disturbance would occur. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plants are present. Project activities would be limited to the already-impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species present. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be permanently affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project areas are located in uplands and project activities do not have the potential to impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be less than one foot below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be consistent with existing land uses and would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-ways. Landing work would be in the same location and would not result in a long-term change of the visual environment.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery in the region.

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 TLM Foreman will notify effected landowners in advance of the construction of the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Frederick Walasavage
Frederick Walasavage - EP-Cellilo
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: August 29, 2022