

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fiber Installation at Megler Radio Station

Project Manager: James Hall—TPC-TPP-4

Location: Pacific and Benton Counties, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow PacificCorp to install underground fiber into BPA's Megler Radio Station. Trenching for fiber installation would be approximately 3-feet-deep by 3-feet-wide by 35-feet-long. Minor indoor equipment upgrades would also occur at BPA's Kennewick Radio Station in Benton County, Washington.

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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Nancy Wittpenn

Nancy Wittpenn
Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 1, 2019

Attachment: 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 main proposed project area is in Pacific County, Washington, located north of the unincorporated town of Megler. It is in Section 14, Township 9 North, Range 10 West. The site is an existing radio tower facility. The surrounding area consists of forested foothill mountains, which have been logged recently. The site is 1.75 miles north of the mouth of the Columbia River. There are small headwater streams located approximately 0.10 miles to the north and south of the site.

BPA's existing Kennewick Radio Station in Benton County, Washington is located in Section 12, Township 7 North, Range 29 East. The site is approximately three miles south of the city of Kennewick and is developed with approximately fifteen other communication towers on the hill top. The surrounding area consists of wind farms and agricultural fields.

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> On April 22, 2019, a consultation initiation letter was sent to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Shoalwater Bay Tribe, and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). On June 19, 2019, a no effect to historic properties determination letter was sent to the consulting parties. DAHP concurred with the determination on June 19, 2019. The remaining consulting parties did not respond.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Excavated soils would be used to backfill the trench. Best Management Practices (BMP) would be used to prevent erosion of soils. There would be no long-term impacts to geology or soils. The minor indoor equipment work at Kennewick would not impact geology or soils.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area at Megler Radio Station is graveled and devoid of vegetation. There would be no impacts to plants. The minor indoor equipment work at Kennewick would not impact plants.</p>		

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



Explanation: US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) was contacted on April 19, 2019 to determine if timing restrictions for marbled murrelet would be warranted for the construction activities at Megler Radio Station. USFWS stated that given the recent logging of the surrounding area, timing restrictions are not necessary and there would be no effect. There are no other special-status wildlife species in the vicinity; therefore, the project would have no impacts on special-status wildlife.

Construction activities may temporarily displace non-listed wildlife but there would be no long-term impacts.

The minor indoor equipment work at Kennewick would not impact wildlife.

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



Explanation: The project areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains, or listed fish species; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources. BMPs would be implemented to avoid erosion during construction at the Megler site.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project areas do not contain wetlands; therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The construction work at the Megler Radio Station would not impact groundwater or aquifers because the maximum depth of disturbance would be three feet.

The minor indoor equipment work at Kennewick would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change to land use at either project location. Additionally, there are no specially designated areas near the project sites.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality at the project locations.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. **Noise**



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

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: During project activities all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or 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 project would occur on BPA owned property and would not require landowner notification or coordination. Both locations are remote and not near any residential properties that would be impacted from project activities.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger—ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: August 1, 2019