

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Vegetation Management at the Bell Complex and Surrounding BPA-Owned Areas
(Update to previous categorical exclusion issued on August 29, 2019)

PP&A No.: 4241

Project Manager: John Tyler, TFBV-3

Location: Spokane County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B2.5 – Facility safety and environmental improvements

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform vegetation management on BPA-owned land on approximately 150 acres of land surrounding Bell Substation. The purpose of the work is to increase visibility and deter trespassers from inhabiting the wooded areas in the vicinity of the substation. Trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of less than 8 inches would be removed and trees with a DBH greater than 8 inches would be limbed up to 15 feet. Approximately 1,000 trees would be removed and 2,000 trees would be limbed.

Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of the following: mowers, excavators, skid-steers, chainsaws, pole saw, masticators, chippers, bucket trucks, and hauling trucks.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 6, 2020

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 proposed project would be conducted on BPA-owned property in the vicinity surrounding the Bell Complex. The project area encompasses approximately 150 acres. Bell is located in Mead, Washington in the BPA Spokane District. The project is mostly flat with grassy vegetation interspersed with ponderosa pine trees. The land use in the surrounding area is residential and industrial. There are no water resources within the project area; an intermittent stream runs approximately ¼ mile southeast of the project area.

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> As there are no ground-disturbing activities associated with this project, the activities are not of a type which would alter any known historic properties. The area has been extensively surveyed in the past and there is no potential to affect historic properties; thus, Section 106 does not need to be initiated. Should the project scope change, this determination would need to be revisited to ensure Section 106 consultation does not need to be added.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed action does not include ground disturbance; therefore, geology and soils would not be affected.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no Federal/state special-status species in the project area. The project footprint is intersected by multiple transmission lines that receive treatment to eliminate all tall-growing vegetation. The project activities would be similar to vegetation management activities already occurring in the surrounding area; therefore, the plants would not be substantially affected by the proposed action.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. The project is located in an industrial area and any wildlife within the vicinity of the project would be accustomed to the operation of a transmission line and openness of a transmission line corridor; therefore, wildlife would not be affected by the proposed action.</p>		

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



Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are present within the vicinity of the proposed work area. This project would therefore have no potential to affect water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present within the vicinity of the proposed work area; therefore, wetlands would not be affected.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed action has no potential to affect groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use. No specially-designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project would increase visibility in the treatment area. The proposed project area is located in an industrial area and the proposed work would not substantially impact the visual quality of the project area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project would have small, temporary impacts on air quality from vehicle emissions and dust that may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. A site-specific health and safety plan would be prepared and implemented to address any hazards during the proposed work. 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Most activities would take place on BPA-owned land. BPA would coordinate with landowners prior to conducting work on privately-owned land.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann

Date: February 6, 2020

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)