

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Dworshak-Taft No. 1 Line Mile 72 to 78 Static Wire Replacement

**PP&A No.:** 4669

**Project Manager:** Robert Zeller – TFSF - Bell

**Location:** Shoshone County, ID

**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 static ground wire in the Dworshak-Taft No. 1 between 72 and 78 mile due to at the ground wire being damaged at various locations in the project area.

Static wire replacement would be in-kind. To replace the static wire, linemen would access the structures, attach static wire and pull with a helicopter from structure 72 to structure 78 and tension the wire. Transmission Line maintenance crews would access the area with heavy equipment that would be pulling the puller and tensioners into place. Clearing of fallen trees and boulders from winter storms along the access road would be required to reach work areas. No ground disturbance would be done to remove fallen trees and boulders. A helicopter would also be utilized with an existing landing zone (LZ) near pole 78/1. Static wire would be towed with a truck and puller and tensioner trailer. Temporary cribbing may be utilized to level and stabilize the trailer.

**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/ Jason Almcrantz*  
Jason Almcrantz  
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

*/s/ Katey C. Grange*  
Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 26, 2021

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:** Dworshak-Taft No. 1: 72 to 78 Static Wire Replacement

## **Project Site Description**

The project area is confined to the areas immediately adjacent to Dworshak-Taft No. 1 structures 72/1 through 78/1 and. The vegetation around the project area is predominantly Douglas-fir and Spruce-fir dominated forest.

The static ground wire replacement activity would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-way, on land managed by the US Forest Service, part of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests in St. Joe National Forest.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no ground disturbance associated with its implementation. The Dworshak-Taft No. 1 is a historic, built environment resource, having been energized and constructed in 1973; however, the project would not affect the integrity of the line as this work is considered normal maintenance allowed by BPA's Multiple Property Document. The project would have no potential to cause effects.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No soil disturbing activities being conducted.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally-sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. In addition, on National Forest System lands, BPA would comply with the Standard Operating Procedures for limiting the spread of invasive species and fire prevention as directed in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state or federally-listed sensitive species.

Notes: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitat.

- Drive on existing access roads.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Crush vegetation in place of removal.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is not located within a floodplain and there are no nearby water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are within the project area.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed and no ground disturbing activities proposed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact existing land uses.

For the project in the St. Joe National Forest, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Bonneville Power Administration United States Department of Energy and the United States Forest Service United States Department of Agriculture Regarding Transmission Facilities and Access to Those Facilities on National Forest System Lands Standard Operation Procedures listed below would be implemented:

- Section V Transmission Facilities
- Section X Fire control communication and coordination
- Appendix E Fire Prevention and Suppression

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right of ways. Only static ground wire would be replaced in-kind.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and continued operation of the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power 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: BPA Realty personnel and the environmental specialist have coordinated with the St. Joe National Forest prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities have been addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Jason Almcrantz  
Jason Almcrantz, EPI-4  
Environmental Engineer

Date: July 26, 2021