

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1 Structure 3/12 Replacement

Project No.: P05381

Project Manager: Rusty Ludt IV, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Lane County, Oregon

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 structure 3/12 on the Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1 transmission line near Lowell, Lane County, Oregon (Township 19 South, Range 1 West, Section 9). The existing wooden H-frame structure is at risk of failure due to age and natural deterioration. Replacement of the transmission structure is required to ensure safe and reliable electrical transmission.

BPA would remove the two wooden poles that constitute the existing H-frame structure and would install two new wooden poles in approximately the same location. The new structure would be approximately 5 feet taller than the existing structure. BPA would also replace jumpers, insulators, and other associated electrical components. The project would require the use of power tools, light-duty vehicles, and heavy equipment, potentially including a backhoe, boom truck, bucket truck, and/or truck-mounted auger. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored on-site and then used for backfill. Vehicles and heavy equipment would be operated on the existing access roads and gravel landing. No new or expanded access roads or landings are proposed; although BPA could add new gravel to the existing access road bed and/or landing area, if required. Following construction, ongoing operation and maintenance of the transmission line would not change from current conditions. Construction would require no more than one day to complete.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange 5/2/2022

Katey C. Grange Date
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: Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1 Structure 3/12 Replacement

Project Site Description

The project site is located entirely within BPA's existing Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1 transmission line right-of-way easement near Lowell, Lane County, Oregon (Township 19 South, Range 1 West, Section 9). The majority of the project site consists of existing gravel access roads and a landing pad, with some low-growing native and non-native weeds, grasses, and shrubs. The project site is underlain by the Ritner soil series, which is not hydric, and no wetlands or water bodies are present. The right-of-way is surrounded by undeveloped forest (predominantly western hemlock [*Tsuga heterophylla*] and Douglas fir [*Pseudotsuga menziesii*]) that is privately-owned and managed for timber production. Historic aerial imagery indicates that the entire forest within 0.25 miles of the project site was clear cut within the last 30 years.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1 transmission line has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, the proposed undertaking would not alter the integrity or eligibility of the transmission line. No archaeological resources would be impacted as all potential ground disturbance would occur in previously-disturbed and graveled areas. Therefore, on May 2, 2022, BPA determined that the proposed undertaking would have no potential to cause effects to historic properties (BPA CR Project No.: OR 2022 095).

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor ground disturbance around the base of the existing transmission structure in an area that was previously disturbed during initial construction of the transmission line. Although vehicles and heavy equipment would be operated on the existing access roads and landing pad, some minor soil compaction could occur. Standard construction best management practices would prevent soil erosion and sedimentation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would crush, remove, or bury some low-growing weeds, grasses, and shrubs where present within the existing gravel access roads and landing pad and around the base of the existing transmission structure. The extent of vegetation

disturbance would be minimal, and temporarily disturbed areas would naturally revegetate soon after completion of the project. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and the proposed action would not impact any suitable special-status species habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior 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: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are present within or near the project site. Standard construction best management practices would prevent indirect impacts to off-site water bodies, floodplains, and fish, if present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. Standard construction best management practices would prevent indirect impacts to off-site wetlands, if present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not generate or use hazardous materials that would contaminate groundwater or aquifers. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The existing transmission structure would be replaced within the existing transmission line right-of-way. There would be no change in land use and no impact to specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of construction equipment and general construction activities, including temporary soil and vegetation disturbance, would cause temporary visual impacts. The new transmission structure would be approximately 5 feet taller than the existing structure, which is a minor visual change relative to the scale of existing

structures. The project site is not located in a visually-sensitive area, and changes would be temporary and/or consistent with the existing visual quality of the transmission line right-of-way.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and localized dust and emissions from use of power tools, vehicles, and heavy equipment would temporarily impact air quality during construction. There would be no permanent change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would produce construction-related noise at levels greater than current ambient conditions. Noise impacts would be intermittent and temporary (no more than one day) and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be completed by transmission line maintenance professionals trained in proper techniques and equipment use. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. Therefore, no impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of the proposed action.

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 action would occur entirely within BPA's existing transmission line right-of-way easement. No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette 5/2/2022
W. Walker Stinnette Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC