Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: TVWD Ridder Road Water Pipeline Crossing

Project No.: PO0487 and LURR 20210015

Project Manager: Micaiah Watkins – TEPF-CSB-2

Location: Clackamas and Washington counties, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities, and B4.7 Fiber optic cable

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to temporarily remove the 15 kilovolt (kV) station service cable located beneath Ridder Road between BPA's Pearl and Oregon City substations, to facilitate the Tualatin Valley Water District's (TVWD) installation of a new water pipeline at this location. The pipeline installation would be conducted by the City of Tualatin's contractors and is not part of the Federal action.

Prior to TVWD's pipeline installation, BPA would install a temporary electrical generator inside the Oregon City Substation's electrical yard. This generator would supply a backup source of station service, if the Pearl Substation station service power failed, while the primary station service is disconnected during TVWD's pipeline installation.

The 15 kV station service cable would then be isolated between the two substations and grounded at both ends. The 15 kV cable and ground conductors would then be disconnected at the underground vault, located on the south side of Ridder Road, near the Pearl Substation to facilitate safe installation of TVWD's new water pipeline on Ridder Road.

If the conduit is damaged during the construction of TVWD's water pipeline, BPA would then install new 4-inch-diameter conduit under Ridder Road and then pull the station service cable and ground conductors through the new conduit to re-connect to the underground vault on the shoulder of Ridder Road.

BPA would also correct small portions of the buried grounding grids at both the Oregon City and Pearl substations in two locations that pose transfer potential hazards. The ground grid connections would be severed just outside the Pearl Substation main entrance fence and in front of the Oregon City control house. At each location, an area approximately 30-feet-long by 20-feet-wide by 4.5-feet deep would be excavated to remove the ground grid. The excavated areas would be backfilled with soil and revegetated. The removed grounding grids would be recycled.

Two existing copper communication cables between the substations would be replaced with a new fiber cable. This would be accomplished by installing conduit in a 3-foot-deep by 100-foot-long trench from the Oregon City control house to just outside the electrical yard fence, where a new wood pole and new fiber vault would also be installed. The new fiber would then continue

overhead for approximately 120-feet across Ridder Road to another new wood pole on the northern edge of the Pearl Substation parcel. The fiber would then go underground to an existing vault, which would require approximately another 20-feet of underground trenching to connect to the existing vault. The new fiber would be spliced in the existing vault with an existing unused fiber cable. See table below for locations and dimensions of new poles and new vault. New terminals and communications equipment would be installed within the Oregon City and Pearl control house.

Approximate Location (coordinates)	**Pole Height (feet)**	**Embed Depth (feet)**	**Underground conduit dimensions**	**Vault**
45.33202° N 122.77891° W	45	6.5	3-feet-deep by 100-feet-long	Connecting to new 4-feet-wide by 4-feet-long by 4-feet-deep vault
45.33173° N 122.77909° W	75	9.5	3-feet-deep by 20-feet-long	Connecting to existing vault

New data cards would be installed at the Dittmer and Munro control centers.

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
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel *02/27/2024*
Sarah T. Biegel Date
NEPA Compliance Officer

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 project site is on BPA fee-owned property at BPA's Oregon City Substation and Pearl Substation and within the public road right-of-way, in Wilsonville, Oregon. The project area is in Sections 2 & 11, Township 3 South, Range 1 West.

Native plants at the site location include bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum),* common tarweed (*Madia gracilis*), trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). Non-native plants detected at the site include centaury (*Centaurium erythraea*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), rabbitfoot clover (*Trifolium arvense*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp.), Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*), common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), plantain (*Plantago* sp.), oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and various non-native grasses.

The nearest waterway is Tapman Creek, which is located 0.2 miles east of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On September 7, 2023, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation (SHPO). No responses were received. A BPA archaeologist then completed background research and an archaeological survey of the area of potential effect (APE). BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect on archaeological or historical resources and provided determination letters and a cultural survey report to the consulting parties on January 12, 2024. To date, no responses have been received.

Notes:

- No new penetrations would be made to the exterior of the Oregon City control house.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: There would be no impact to geology and insignificant impacts to soils.

The maximum depth of disturbance would be 10-feet-deep for wood pole installation for the overhead fiber. Excavated areas would be backfilled with excavated soils.

Notes:

- Use erosion control best management practices.
- Dispose of extra excavated soils in upland areas.
- Revegetate disturbed soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal or state special-status species or habitats in or near the project area. Himalayan blackberry removal may be necessary in discrete locations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal or state special-status species or habitats. Some wildlife may temporarily avoid the project area during construction. Construction noise levels would be similar to or slightly above the ambient noise levels from substation operations and traffic on Ridder Road.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish, in or near the project area; therefore, the project would have no effect on these resources.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project location is not in, or near, wetlands; therefore, the project would have no effect on wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not affect groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be 10-feet-deep and is unlikely to come in contact with groundwater. The project is 20 miles south of the Troutdale Aquifer EPA Sole Source Aquifer.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Land use at the project location would remain unchanged; therefore, there would be no effect on land use. There are no specially-designated areas at, or near, the project location.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The additional wood poles for the overhead fiber installation would be compatible with the existing visual quality of the substations and distribution transmission lines along Ridder Road. There would be no significant change to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The possible use of a backup generator would result in insignificant reductions in air quality. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant change to air quality during or after construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The diesel backup generator that would be used to provide station service during construction, would result in 66 decibels of increased noise at 23 feet from the generator. This level of decibels is considered within normal range, similar to moderate traffic, and would pose little to no risk of hearing damage. Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operation noise would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no project impacts to human health and 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: 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 project is occurring on BPA fee-owned land and within the road right-of-way, which is surrounded by commercial and industrial developments. There are no adjacent residential landowners that would need to be notified.

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* *02/27/2024*
Beth Belanger – ECT-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist