

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Radio Communication Equipment Removal – #NC Non-Disturbance

Project Manager: Jennifer Bachman – TEPF-CSB-2

Location: King and Kittitas counties, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to decommission communication equipment at the substation and radio stations listed below. Replacement equipment has already been installed and now BPA needs to remove obsolete equipment. Work would include removing decommissioned antennas and wave guides on towers, a passive repeater, and analog radio equipment on racks inside control houses. This work would not cause any new ground disturbance, and would occur at the following BPA facilities:

- Easton Radio Station – remove two analog radios and two antennas
- Echo Lake Substation – remove two analog radios and one antenna
- Echo Lake Passive Repeater Site – remove the passive repeater from a transmission tower
- North Bend Radio Station – remove three analog radios and four antennas
- Teanaway Radio Station – remove three analog radios and three antennas
- Schultz Substation – remove one analog radio and one antenna
- Covington Substation – remove two analog radios and two antennas

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/ Tish Eaton

Tish Eaton

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 20, 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

Work would take place within BPA substations, radio facilities, and a passive repeater site on BPA fee-owned property in Washington except for Easton Radio Station (located on transmission line easement managed by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest) and North Bend Radio Station (located on Washington Department of Natural Resources-managed land). All project areas have previously been disturbed.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA’s archaeologist and historian reviewed proposed activities and determined that these types of activities do not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would occur at these existing communication sites.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would occur at these existing communication sites.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA consulted with USFWS regarding potential impacts on northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet from the proposed project. BPA determined that project activities may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect these species. USFWS concurred with this determination (on March 26, 2019, May 10, 2019 and May 15, 2019) but has required that the following work window be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All work at North Bend, Easton, and Teanaway radio stations would occur between July 16 and September 30 to minimize potential disturbance effects to northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets <p>While Echo Lake Radio Station and Echo Lake Passive Repeater site are also located within a northern spotted owl management circle, USFWS noted that the area has been intensively managed for timber production so suitable habitat is likely not present within a 0.25-mile radius of the sites.</p> <p>Schultz and Covington substations are not located near or within designated critical habitat or suitable habitat for northern spotted owl or marbled murrelet.</p> <p>BPA has made a no effect determination for other ESA-listed species with the potential to occur in the project</p>		

area including gray wolf, wolverine, Canada lynx, yellow-billed cuckoo, and bull trout.

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



Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish are present at the communication sites.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present at the communication sites.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur at these existing communication sites.

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



Explanation: All work would occur within the existing communication sites and are allowed uses. Because Easton Radio Station is on National Forest System lands managed by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and North Bend Radio Station is on state-owned lands managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the BPA Realty Specialist and Project Manager would coordinate required notification and entry protocol with the land owner/manager before work begins at each site.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Equipment would be removed which may actually improve the immediate visual quality of these sites.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Dust would be generated while equipment is being removed but the amount and duration would be temporary.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Sites are located in rural areas. Noise would occur from vehicles on access roads travelling to the sites and from equipment removal but the duration temporary and during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: All safety requirements would be followed for equipment removal which would minimize 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, 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: Most sites are owned in fee by BPA. Others are owned by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and Washington Department of Natural Resources. All access rights have been acquired. The BPA Realty Specialist and Project Manager would coordinate required notification and entry protocol with the landowner/manager before work begins at each site.

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

Signed: /s/ Tish Eaton
Tish Eaton – ECT-4

Date: August 20, 2019