

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Nespelem Valley Electric Cooperative's Chicken Creek Substation Tap Interconnection

Project No.: L0390

Project Manager: Cynthia Rounds, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Okanogan County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to construct a tap structure to allow Nespelem Valley Electric Cooperative to interconnect their new Chicken Creek Substation to BPA's East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No 1 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The transmission line is a double-circuit line; the lattice-steel structures carry both the East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek transmission line and the Chief Joseph-East Omak transmission line. BPA actions would include new structures within the existing transmission line right-of-way to accommodate the line tap, a support structure for the existing conductors, and metering equipment in the Chicken Creek Substation. Nespelem Valley Electric's new substation would support local irrigation demands.

Construction of the tap structure would involve installation of two 3-pole (wood) dead-end structures placed between the existing transmission line structures 10/4 and 10/5. Each of the new wood poles would be about 50 feet tall and would have guy wires connecting the top portion of the pole with guy anchors embedded about 10 feet deep in the ground. Two disconnect switches would be installed adjacent to the wood-pole structures and would consist of three single-pole switch subassemblies mounted atop a lattice-steel support structure. Each switch support structure would be about 26 feet wide by 14 feet long and 24 feet tall, and would be installed on gravel substrate. To anchor equipment for transmission line re-stringing line purposes, BPA would use up to six temporary snub anchors within the rights-of-way. Upon project completion, the snub anchor and plate would be excavated and removed. Fall protection equipment would be installed on structures to meet current safety standards.

In addition, to prevent the conductors of the Grand Coulee-Foster Creek transmission line from swinging into the new 3-pole dead-end structures during strong wind events, a single wood-pole support structure would be installed approximately mid-span. This wood pole structure would be up-to 80 feet tall and have up-to three guy wires on each side of the pole. On each side of the pole, the three guy wires would connect between the top portion of the pole and a guy anchor, embedded about 10 feet deep.

At Nespelem Valley Electric Cooperative's Chicken Creek Substation, BPA would install and own a rack of revenue metering equipment. The rack would be installed in the substation control house and would wire the electronic equipment to the customer provided power source and connect to customer provided termination blocks.

All work would take place either within the existing transmission right-of-way or in the substation control house. No tree removal or access road improvements are proposed with this project.

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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 11, 2019

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: Nespelem Valley Electric Cooperative’s Chicken Creek Substation Tap Interconnection (L0390)

Project Site Description

The project site is located within the BPA’s East Omak Tap to Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1 transmission line right-of-way near structure 10/4, in Okanogan County, Washington in T30N R25E Sec 12 and Sec 13. The project area is located on trust lands owned by the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and is completely surrounded by orchard trees, which dominate the landscape in this local region. Unpaved access roads pass through the orchards along uncultivated, relatively steep slopes that contain native and non-native vegetation.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA initiated Section 106 consultation on October 24, 2017, with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.</p> <p>On October 18, 2018, the BPA archaeologist determined that the proposed undertaking would have no adverse effect to historic properties. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation responded on December 18, 2018 that they concur with the archaeologist’s findings.</p> <p>Should cultural materials be encountered during the implementation of the project, work shall halt immediately, and the BPA archaeologist should be notified.</p>		
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Excess soil would be spread out or stockpiled onsite in the ROW. The exact location would be coordinated with the landowner. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to avoid or minimize erosion or sedimentation impacts to surrounding areas.</p>		
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of any plants listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on ESA-listed plant species. Vegetation that would be impacted by this project include: big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), gray rabbitbrush (<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>), Russian tumbleweed (<i>salsola tragus</i>), Nightshade (<i>Solanum spp.</i>), tarragon (<i>dracunculus</i>), alfalfa (<i>Medicago sativa</i>) and an <i>Aster</i> species. No orchard trees would be removed or altered during this project. To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be cleaned before and after project activities.</p>		
<p>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of wildlife species listed under the ESA in the project area, nor is there any designated critical habitat in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on ESA-listed wildlife species or designated critical habitat.</p>		

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

Explanation: There are no waterbodies, floodplains or fish habitat within 0.5-mile of the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on waterbodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There is a potential wetland (about 1.5 acres in size) located approximately 25 feet north of the project area's northernmost boundary line, on the opposite side of a gravel road, and located approximately 10 to 15 feet downhill of the gravel road in a depression in the topography. BMPs would be implemented to prevent any potential erosion or sedimentation from entering into the wetland.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater is proposed.

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

Explanation: No specially-designated land uses are present in the project area. The project activities would be consistent and compatible with land uses within and adjacent to the project area.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: All work would be completed within the existing BPA right-of-way. Despite new structures and equipment being installed, because the installation area is located in the existing right-of-way, the new equipment would have no measurable effect on the visual quality of the project area. Ground clearing and excavation would occur within the right-of-way, but these areas would be re-graded and restored as much as possible to pre-excavation conditions. The excavation areas would be seeded with an appropriate seed mix for the project area.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area during construction activities.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary increase in noise would occur during construction activities.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: There would be no impact to 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:

- 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: BPA coordinated with Nesperlem Valley Electric Cooperative and the landowner.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill
Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Date: January 11, 2019