

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Vantage Substation Shunt Installation and Impairment Remediation

Project Manager: Mark A. Korsness, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Grant 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: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to improve the line rating for Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 1 and to correct an impairment on Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 2 at BPA's Vantage Substation in Grant County, Washington (Township 16 N, Range 23 E, Section 16). The project is required to ensure system reliability and to prevent damage to the lines or equipment.

To improve the line rating for Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 1, BPA would install a conductor fitting shunt on Structure 1/3, which is located within the substation yard. All work would occur on the transmission structure, and no ground disturbance would be required.

To correct the impairment on Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 2, BPA would replace a single guy wire and anchor plate associated with Pole A of Structure 1/2. Using a backhoe, BPA would excavate to remove and replace the existing anchor plate and install a new anchor plate in a location that would provide adequate clearance between the new guy wire and the tie line. Excavated soils would be stored temporarily on site and then used for backfill. Vehicles and equipment would be required to travel off-road for approximately 100 feet from the improved main substation entrance road to the base of Structure 1/2. No access road work or landing pad construction would be required.

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

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

June 23, 2021

Date

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: Vantage Substation Shunt Installation and Impairment Remediation

Project Site Description

The project site is located within and immediately outside of the substation yard at BPA's Vantage Substation in Grant County, Washington (Township 16 N, Range 23 E, Section 16). All work associated with the shunt installation on Structure 1/3 on Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 1 would occur within the fenced substation yard, which is previously disturbed, covered in crushed rock, and maintained clear of vegetation. All work associated with the guy wire and anchor plate replacement on Structure 1/2 on Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 2 would occur within an existing transmission line right-of-way located west of the substation yard. Ground cover in this area consists of perennial grasses interspersed with sagebrush. The project site is underlain by the Schawana soil series, which is not hydric. No waterbodies or wetlands are present within 1,000 feet of the site. Land surrounding the project site is primarily undeveloped shrub-steppe habitat intersected by a network of 500-kilovolt transmission lines and graveled and paved access roads.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Although Vantage Substation was determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, Vantage Substation Tie Lines No. 1 and No. 2 were not identified as contributing resources. Replacement of the guy wire and anchor plate associated with Structure 1/2 on Vantage Substation Tie Line No. 2 would require ground disturbance outside of the fenced substation yard. However, because Structure 1/2 is located in an area that was previously disturbed to a depth of up to 5 feet during construction of the substation and associated ground grid, it is highly unlikely that archaeological resources would be encountered during the anchor plate replacement. Therefore, the proposed undertaking would have no potential to cause effects on historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include excavation to remove and replace the guy anchor plate and minor soil compaction and tire tracks from off-road use of vehicles and equipment. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored onsite, backfilled, and then graded to original contours.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

- BPA would minimize the number of off-road vehicle trips necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground excavation to remove and replace the guy anchor plate and off-road use of vehicles and equipment would crush or strip vegetation in some areas. Following completion of the project, disturbed areas would naturally revegetate. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on special-status plant species or habitats.

Notes:

- BPA would wash vehicles and equipment prior to arriving to the project site and immediately after completion of the project, to remove all soil and vegetative material and prevent the spread of noxious weeds.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.
- BPA would minimize the number of off-road vehicle trips necessary to safely complete the project.
- BPA field crews would maintain basic firefighting equipment onsite, such as shovels, dry chemical fire extinguishers, and/or pressurized water fire extinguishers, if required.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely be habituated to this level of human activity given the proximity to Vantage Substation, and work would take no more than two days to complete. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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 are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: It is unlikely that soil excavation would be deep enough to intersect groundwater or aquifers, if present. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

Notes:

- BPA would maintain spill response materials onsite to quickly address inadvertent spills, if required.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not require a change in land use. The project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Adding a shunt and replacing a guy wire and plate anchor would constitute minor visual changes relative to the scale of existing structures and equipment. The final equipment configuration would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area. The project site is not located in a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. Noise would be temporary (no more than 2 days) and intermittent and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project site, and there would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work crews would follow appropriate safety precautions for working in an energized substation yard and at heights on transmission structures. No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project activities.

Notes:

- BPA field crews would maintain basic firefighting equipment onsite, such as shovels, dry chemical fire extinguishers, and/or pressurized water fire extinguishers, if required

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: All proposed work would occur on BPA fee-owned property or within BPA's existing easement on property owned by Grant County PUD. BPA would notify Grant County PUD of the proposed project. No other landowner notification, involvement, or coordination is 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 June 23, 2021
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT