

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY21 Alvey District Priority Wood Pole Replacement Project

**PP&A No.:** 4849

**Project Manager:** Rusty Ludt

**Location:** Douglas, Lane, and Linn counties, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine maintenance; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace several wood pole structures that are damaged and are in need of repair immediately. The location of the wood pole replacements are shown in the following table.

Transmission Line	Structure Number	County (Oregon)
Albany-Lebanon No. 1	12/9	Linn
Martin Creek-Drain No. 1	9/5 to 11/6	Douglas
Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1	1/1, 3/2, 9/5, 9/10	Lane
Lookout Point-Alvey No. 2	1/1, 7/1, 7/5, 9/4, 9/5, 15/9	Lane
Eugene-Alvey No. 2	8/8, 9/9, 13/4	Lane
Eugene-Lane No. 1	1/3, 1/4	Lane
Cougar-Holden Creek No. 1	6/2, 11/4, 11/5, 11/6, 25/6	Lane
Dexter Tap to Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1	1/1, 1/2	Lane

The structures would be replaced in kind which is ideally done by pulling the existing structure out of the ground, auguring the existing hole and placing a new pole in the ground. In some instances, a backhoe may be necessary to excavate a larger hole for a pole to avoid sediment collapse. On occasion, new holes would be excavated, typically within five feet of the existing hole. A landing may be needed immediately adjacent to the wood pole structure so that equipment may be leveled and operated safely. This may involve the leveling of a minimum area of 30 foot by 60 foot. Five segments of access roads, totaling approximately 19,200 feet, would be improved as part of the project. This would be limited to blading, grading, and rocking of existing access road segments that have become impassable.

**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/ Aaron Shurtliff*  
Aaron Shurtliff  
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel      Date: July 13, 2023  
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:** FY21 Alvey District Priority Wood Pole Replacement Project

## **Project Site Description**

The structures that would be replaced are in a mix of agricultural, rural residential, and forested land (including Willamette National Forest lands). There are no waterbodies within the project areas requiring in-water work.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On April 2, 2023, BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the United States Forest Service – Willamette National Forest, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. A determination of **no adverse effect to historic properties** was sent to all consulting parties on June 13, 2023. BPA did not receive any comments back from any of the consulting parties 30 days after the determination was sent.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include some excavation to remove the wood poles and replace with new ones. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored onsite, backfilled, and then graded to original contours. Road improvements would involve some blading that would disturb the top layer of soil.

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.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

#### **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. 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: There are no water bodies within the project area.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands located within the project area.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Groundwater would not be impacted as part of the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not change existing land use nor is the project within a specially-designated area.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The wood pole structures would be replaced in-kind and would not change the existing visual quality of the 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. 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. Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

### **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 project activities have been coordinated with landowners, including Willamette National Forest.

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Shurtliff  
Aaron Shurtliff  
Environmental Engineer

Date: July 13, 2023