

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1 & Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1 Impairment Remedies

PP&A No.: 5031

Project Manager: Meadow Nelson - TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Grays Harbor County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3-Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to remedy impairments and install shunts in multiple locations along the South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1, Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1, and Cosmopolis-Aberdeen No. 1 transmission lines. BPA owns and operates these transmission lines, which are located on private and BPA fee-owned land in Grays Harbor County, Washington. The lines are supported by wood pole structures. BPA has identified numerous impairments to the lines that need to be remedied as soon as possible. A transmission line impairment is where the distance between the ground surface and the energized conductor does not have adequate clearance for safe and reliable operation. This clearance violation does not meet the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards and BPA is required to remedy the impairment in a specified amount of time.

The impairments would be remedied by adding prop structures, raising existing structures, or by removing and replacing structures. New structures would be raised by installing taller poles in the same locations as the existing poles. Reconductoring would be performed along some sections of the transmission line. The new conductors will be 0.424 inches larger than the old conductors; however, they would be similar in color and all other appearances. The South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1 and Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1 lines also require the replacement of numerous shunts (hardware devices that are attached to existing hardware to regulate voltage) to meet safety and reliability standards. Shunt replacement is performed at the structure, on foot, and does not require ground disturbance or motorized vehicles. Table 1 (see attachment) lists the proposed actions, work areas, and associated structure locations for this project. Permanent work areas, such as new structures, roads, or landings, are noted in the table. Temporary work areas include existing landings and access roads adjacent to the structure locations in the cleared transmission corridor. Landing areas are approximately 30-60 feet by 30-60 feet, structure areas are approximately 150 by 150 feet, and the transmission corridor ranges from approximately 200 to 300 feet wide.

To support the proposed work, BPA would conduct some access road and landing improvements, with approximately 200 feet of new road construction to allow access to the new 16/4 structure. Equipment generally used for this work includes an excavator, boom trucks, graders, gravel trucks, and light duty trucks. The work would be performed in 2024.

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/ Samantha Rinker

Samantha Rinker

Biological Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 26, 2024

Attachments:

Environmental Checklist

Table 1. Proposed Actions & Work Areas

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: South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1 & Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1 Impairment Remedies

Project Site Description

The proposed action is located in the Coast Range ecoregion of western Washington. This ecoregion receives significant rainfall and is dominated by coniferous forests, primarily of Douglas-fir, western red cedar, and western hemlock. The region is known for its Douglas-fir timber plantations and heavily logged landscape. The project's Action Area is located on privately-owned land, with land uses ranging from private timber, rural residential and agricultural. The Chehalis River crosses under the South Elma-Satsop Park No.1 line between structures 1/8 and 1/9.

The proposed action would occur within BPA rights-of-way (ROWs) and access roads for the South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1, Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1, and Cosmopolis-Aberdeen No. 1 transmission lines, on both privately owned and BPA fee-owned land.

Transmission Line	Structure(s)	Township	Range	Section	Ownership
South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1	1/8, 1/9	17N	6W	12	Private
	3/4, 3/5	17N	6W	10	Private
Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1	2/3, 2/6	17N	6W	7	Private
	5/3	17N	7W	15	Private
	6/3	17N	7W	16	Private
	9/6	17N	8W	24	Private
	10/2	17N	8W	23	Private
	11/6	17N	8W	27	Private
	12/4, 12/6, 13/1, 13/2	17N	8W	28	Private
	13/6, 13/7, 13/8, 14/1, 14/2	17N	8W	29	Private
	14/3, 14/4, 14/5, 14/6, 14/7	17N	8W	30	Private
	15/4, 15/5, 15/6, 15/7, 15/8, 16/2, 16/3	17N	9W	24	Private
	16/4, 16/5, 16/6, 16/7	17N	9W	23	Private
Cosmopolis-Aberdeen No. 1	1/1	17N	9W	23	BPA

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, BPA evaluated the proposed project and developed an Area of Potential Effects (APE). On April 12, 2024, BPA initiated consultation on the proposed undertaking with the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Quinault Indian Nation, Shoalwater Bay Tribe, Squaxin Island Tribe, and the Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation.

BPA conducted background research with the Washington state cultural resource database, followed by an intensive field survey of the APE. Background research identified 27 previously recorded cultural resources within one mile of the APE, however, none were located within the APE itself. The field survey identified two historic-built environmental resources: Satsop Park-Cosmopolis No. 1 and South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1 Transmission Lines. However, BPA concluded the proposed actions are considered normal maintenance and would not affect integrity of these resources. On June 6, 2024, BPA made a determination that the project would have no adverse effect to historic or cultural resources, and no responses were received from consulting parties within the 30-day comment period.

Notes: In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA will require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include excavation to remove and install the new wood pole structures, and during access road and landing improvements. Ground disturbing activities would predominately occur in the existing access road easement and transmission line right-of-way.

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: Local plants would be disturbed at the proposed prop structure locations, as well as landing and access road improvement locations. If possible, pulling sites would be set up on existing access roads. If this is not possible, vegetation would be mowed or crushed in place, not cleared.

However, work area footprint would be limited to the existing transmission right-of-way corridor and minimized as much as possible at the work site locations. Upon project completion, the area would be re-graded to match existing contours and seeded with a native seed mix.

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA obtained an official species list from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on April 22, 2024. No ESA-listed plants or habitat are present in the project area, therefore, the project would have “No Effect” on ESA-listed plant species. BPA reviewed available data sources, and no special status state species and/or habitat is documented in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Local wildlife, such as small to midsized mammals and birds, could be disturbed by project activities, assuming they are present in the project area. However, disturbance would be temporary, and the surrounding landscape provides ample habitat and cover for displaced animals.

In accordance with the ESA, BPA obtained an official species list from USFWS on April 22, 2024. After a review of the habitat within the project area, and recorded ESA-listed species observations, BPA determined that the project would have “No Effect” on marbled murrelet, yellow-billed cuckoo, western pond turtle, bull trout and the candidate species monarch butterfly. BPA reviewed available data sources, and no special status state species and/or habitat is documented in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Two wood pole structures being replaced are located within the Chehalis River floodplain. The Chehalis River provides essential fish habitat for Chinook and coho salmon species, however, no in-water work is proposed under the scope of this project. This project is not expected to alter or affect existing habitat. The two wood pole structures would have pole wraps installed to prevent wood pole preservative from entering the environment. Erosion control best management practices would ensure that sedimentation would not enter into any water body.

BPA submitted an action notification under its Endangered Species Act Section 7 Programmatic Conference and Biological Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species to Administer Maintenance or Rebuild Projects for Transmission Line and Road Access Actions Authorized or Carried Out by the Bonneville Power Administration in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho (SLOPES WCR-2014-1600) on April 19, 2024. National Marine Fisheries Services reviewed the proposal and approved the proposed work on May 6, 2024.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A wetland delineation was not completed for the project. However, suspected wetland areas with appropriate soil and vegetation characteristics would be avoided by placing any new structure outside of suspected wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur below groundwater level.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would include the addition of new mid-span prop structures in some locations. The new structures would be located along the existing ROW. Towers being replaced with taller structures would remain in their existing locations and would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area. The proposed project would not substantially change the existing visual character of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor, local impacts to air quality would occur due to construction activity and vehicular traffic, however impacts would be temporary and insignificant. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activity would generate noise. However, impacts would be local and relatively minor. All project activity would occur during daylight hours, 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 with Conditions

Explanation: The project would have benefits to human health and safety, as the purpose of the project is to restore safety and reliability clearance standards currently affected by the line impairments.

Notes:

- Prior to the start of the project, work crews would identify and discuss the job hazards and safety concerns and follow all BPA and OSHA safety procedures during construction.

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: BPA would coordinate project activities with landowners and land managers at proposed work locations, and would continue to coordinate during construction and site restoration.

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

Signed: /s/ Samantha Rinker

Date: July 26, 2024

Samantha Rinker
Biological Scientist (Environmental)

Table 1. Proposed Actions & Work Areas

Transmission Line	Span/Structure(s)	Proposed Actions	Work Areas
South Elma-Satsop Park No. 1	Throughout Transmission Line	Install 45 shunts at dead-end structures and splice fittings.	No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	1/8 and 1/9	Construct three new structures; two of which are on either side of the Chehalis River (1/8 and 1/9) and would be constructed to be 56 feet tall	No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	3/4 and 3/5	Construct new prop structure in between existing structures 3/4 and 3/5	Work would be performed mid-span between 3/4 and 3/5. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
Satsop Park- Cosmopolis No. 1	Throughout Transmission Line	Reconductor 3 miles of the transmission line. Replace and install 150 shunts located at dead-end structures and splice fittings.	No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	-	Rebuild 17 existing wood pole structures and install 4 new prop structures. The new structures and their new proposed heights are below. A total of six structures would be removed to accommodate the newly proposed structures	-
	2/3	Raise to 85 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	2/6	Raise to 85 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure.

			No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	5/3	Raise to 80 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. Landing would be improved.
	6/3	Raise to 65 feet	New structure would be inserted 600 feet ahead on line of 6/2. Landing would be improved.
	9/6	Raise to 75 feet	Landing and access road would be improved.
	10/2	Raise to 70 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	11/6	Raise to 60 feet	New structure would be inserted 575 feet ahead on line of 11/5. Landing and access road would be improved.
	12/4	Raise to 95 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	12/6	Raise to 60 feet	New structure would be inserted 645 feet ahead on line of 12/5.

			Landing and access road would be improved.
	13/1	Raise to 65 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	13/2	Raise to 75 feet	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	13/7	Raise to 70 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	14/2	Raise to 65 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. Landing would be improved.
	14/7	Raise to 70 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. Landing and access road would be improved.
	15/4	Raise to 70 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure.

			Minor landing improvements.
	15/7	Raise to 60 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work. Access road would be brushed out.
	15/8	Raise to 60 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work. Access road would be brushed out.
	16/3	Raise to 65 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work.
	16/4	Raise to 80 feet.	New structure would be inserted 545 feet ahead on line of 16/3. New landing and access road would be constructed.
	16/5	Raise to 75 feet.	New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure. No new roads or landings would be needed for this work. Access road would be brushed out.

	16/6	Raise to 60 feet.	<p>New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure.</p> <p>No new roads or landings would be needed for this work. Access road would be brushed out.</p>
	14/7, 16/5, and 16/6	This work would require pulling and tensioning sites which are located at structure	-
Cosmopolis-Aberdeen No. 1	1/1	Replace structure	<p>New structure would be inserted in same location as existing structure.</p> <p>No new roads or landings would be needed for this work. Access road would be brushed out.</p>