

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: DeMoss – Fossil No. 1 Wood Pole Replacement

PP&A No.: 4341

Project Manager: Robert Yurst – TELP-TPP

Location: Wasco County, Oregon.

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 replace deteriorating wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on the DeMoss-Fossil No.1 transmission line. Replacement would be in-kind and would utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger would be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement. Maintenance of existing landings and access roads may be required within the existing road prism to allow for safe working conditions.

The project would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Fred Walasavage

Fred Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel Date: August 10, 2020

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: DeMoss-Fossil No.1 Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement

Project Site Description

The project activities would be conducted on BPA Transmission line rights of way. The sites are located on state and private lands. Adjacent land uses primarily consist of agriculture and range. The project area is a mix of flat and gently sloped lands with periodic small canyons. Vegetation consists of steppe shrubs and grasses.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
DeMoss-Fossil No. 1	1/4	1S	17E	3	Sherman, OR	Private/Agricultural
	7/14	1S	18E	9		Private/Agricultural
	9/1, 9/2, 9/3, 9/4, 9/5, 9/6, 9/7, 9/8, 9/9, 9/10	1S	18E	11		Private/Agricultural
	16/3	1S	19E	32	Gilliam, OR	State Lands/Range
	21/1, 21/2, 21/3, ,	2S	18E	22		Private/Agricultural
	21/4, 21/5, 21/6	2S	19E	23		Private/Agricultural
	32/5	3S	20E	34		Private/Agricultural
	34/1	4S	20E	2		Private/Agricultural

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On June 29, 2020, BPA submitted a Determination of No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties to the Oregon SHPO, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the United States Bureau of Land Management. No comments were received from Oregon SHPO within the 30-day required review period. No response was received from other consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would require minimal ground-disturbing activities. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, species within the project area. No vegetation removal is expected; however, any disturbed areas outside of 15 feet from the poles would be reseeded.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, species and habitats were identified within the project area. No suitable habitat is present in project area for listed wildlife species. Wildlife in the project area would experience temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise levels and construction vehicle presence.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in project area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No contact with groundwater. The proposed work is in an upland area; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 10 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use and no specially-designated areas identified.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: New wood poles would be similar to existing structures and would not be noticeably different than existing structures.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact since construction noise would be temporary and localized.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. The proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

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: Notification letters would be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to landowner prior to work

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

/s/ Fred Walasavage Date: *August 10, 2020*
Environmental Protection Specialist