Categorical Exclusion Determination
Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Big Eddy-Troutdale and Ostrander-Troutdale Priority Insulator Assembly Replacements

PP&A No.: 3233

Project Manager: Glenn Vanbergen, Project Manager - TEP-TPP-1

Location: Multnomah County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to replace severely worn insulator assemblies on the Big Eddy-Troutdale transmission line (miles 70-76) and the Ostrander-Troutdale line (miles 17-23). The worn insulator assemblies have recently been identified as a risk of imminent failure if high winds common to the area are encountered or an ice load event occurs in coming winter months. The lines are located along the Columbia River Gorge south of I-84; Township 1N, Range 4E, Sections 19, 30, 29, 32, 33, 4, 3, 2, 11, 12. Insulator assemblies are located at the attachment points between the conductor and the transmission line towers. The planned replacement project will replace the existing insulator assemblies which consist of attachment hardware and glass insulators, with new assemblies which will be the same color, size and appearance as those being removed. To replace the insulator assemblies, cranes would be used to support the conductor while support crews working from bucket trucks unbolt the damaged assemblies which then are lowered to the ground for removal. Light vehicles would ferry new insulator assemblies to replacement crews on Big Eddy-Troutdale, and helicopters would be used to fly assemblies on Ostrander-Troutdale.

Existing access roads would be used to reach the line structures, with the exception of the rights-of-way (ROW) on Sandy River Delta Park. An access way would need to be mowed along the existing route-of-travel in the ROW to reach structure sites and to provide a work space at each structure landing. For access to all other structures, existing access roads would be used. At critical crossing locations for protection of the public, ”phase-to-phase” guards will be installed in structures. Helicopter landing yards will be used during Ostrander-Troutdale work, one potentially on the Sandy River Delta Park, and a second on private property south of I-84. No tree clearing or in-steam work is required for this project.

Mowing in the ROW would precede work to be performed under electrical outages. All replacement work would take place under electrical outages with Big Eddy-Troutdale beginning August 10, 2015 and Ostrander-Troutdale beginning October 13, 2015. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. The proposed project is located on the Mt. Hood National Forest in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, and private residential and agricultural lands.

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-
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/ Kevin George
Kevin George
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason Date: August 3, 2015
Stacy L. Mason
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:** Big Eddy-Troutdale and Ostrander-Troutdale Priority Insulator Assembly Replacements

**Project Site Description**

All work would occur within the existing transmission line right-of-way that crosses private residential and agricultural land, the Sandy River Delta Park managed by the Forest Service, and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The ROW consists of grasses, shrubs, agriculture crops, and seasonally wet areas.

**Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Resource Impacts</th>
<th>No Potential for Significance</th>
<th>No Potential for Significance, with Conditions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</td>
<td>[✓]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation:</strong></td>
<td>No ground disturbing activities will be taking place for this project. Additionally OR SHPOs database of known surveys was reviewed and no cultural resources were identified in areas the project will be taking place. BPA has made the determination that this project has no potential to disturb cultural resources. Therefore according to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800, BPA’s consultation requirements have been fulfilled. This determination has been shared with the USFS for their managed lands.</td>
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<td>2. Geology and Soils</td>
<td>[✓]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<td><strong>Explanation:</strong></td>
<td>Minimal soil disturbance; project requires no new roads. Rock may be added to low areas in roads but there will be no blading or earthwork of any kind will taking place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[✓]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation:</strong></td>
<td>No known special-status species present in project locations. Work is to be conducted in an existing transmission line Right of Way (ROW). In Sandy River Delta Park a route-of-travel approx. 1.12 miles long by 16 feet wide will be mowed in the ROW to structures, and at structure work sites an area of 100 feet by 100 feet will be mowed, through tall growing grasses (primarily reed canary grass). This area is seasonally inundated by water. For this project access will be during the late dry season to be protective of sensitive soils and plants. Should soils in this area become wet and unable to support construction vehicles specialized wetland protection mats will be utilized. Any disturbed areas will be restored and stabilized in accordance with land manager requirements which may include relieving compaction, raking and reseeding. To limit weed transmission, all equipment shall be thoroughly cleaned and inspected for soils, vegetative matter, and oils and greases before entering the project ROW.</td>
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</table>
4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)

   **Explanation:**
   No special status species identified in the project area.

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

   **Explanation:**
   There will be no in-water work taking place on this project. All construction vehicles will be equipped with emergency oil spill response kits.

6. **Wetlands**

   **Explanation:**
   The Sandy River Delta Park seasonally is inundated by water and the ROW is interspersed with wetlands. For this project access will be during the late dry season when soils are dry and can support the construction equipment weight without compressing sensitive soils and damaging sensitive plant root systems. Should soils in this area become wet and unable to support construction vehicles without rutting, specialized wetland protection mats will be utilized. Any disturbed areas will be restored and stabilized in accordance with land manager requirements which may include relieving compaction, raking, mulching and/or reseeding.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

   **Explanation:**
   No new wells or use of ground water proposed.

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

   **Explanation:**
   This project is partially located in Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA). In consultation with the Gorge Commission, this project is consistent with the Savings Policies 5 & 6 of the National Scenic Area Act (CRGNSA letter of consistency dated 08/03/15).

   - Sandy River Delta Park
     - In Sandy River Delta Park up to 21.9 acres of tall growing grasses (primarily reed canary grass) may need to be mowed for a ROW route-of-travel and for structure work sites within the existing transmission line ROW. Within the route-of-travel and at structure sites in the ROW, BPA will cut and much tall grasses. These materials may be left on site if it can be mulched well and dispersed evenly, otherwise, it will need to be removed from the project area. In the event soils in this area become unable to support construction equipment weight, specialized wetland construction mats will be utilized.
     - Project personnel are responsible for equipment and work site security.
     - For restoration purposes, only utilize seed mixes approved by the land manager.
     - As this is National Forest System land the nearest Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL) for fire precautions will apply. During mowing and construction activities when fire danger is present, have a portable 300-gallon water tank (minimum) with pumping capabilities, and 300 feet of 1-inch fire hose complete with nozzle and a Fire Tool for every person on site (shovel, Pulaski, or ax).
     - Vehicles are to remain on the authorized access road and within the mowed portions of the BPA ROW. Parking on tall dry grass or brush shall be avoided. Any gravels or rock used on roads on USFS lands will be certified weed free.
     - Project personnel will take all necessary measures to provide for public safety during operations.
9. **Visual Quality**

   **Explanation:**
   The planned replacement project will replace the existing insulator assemblies which consist of attachment hardware and glass insulators, with new assemblies which will be the same color, size and appearance as those being removed.

   A route-of-travel will be mowed in the tall growing grasses. Cut material will be mulched and may be left on-site. These grasses are anticipated to fully rebound during the following growing season.

10. **Air Quality**

   **Explanation:**
   Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction. Vehicle speeds will be limited to 10 miles an hour on roads accessing the ROW. Additionally, water will be used to limit dust on project access roads.

11. **Noise**

   **Explanation:**
   Temporary noise due to road improvement, helicopter, and conductor replacement equipment.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

   **Explanation:**
   The project would not impact human health or safety

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**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:** Carry out ongoing consultation with USFS for activities on the Sandy River Delta Park for the protection of the public during work operations.

- 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
**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Discussions are on-going with the Hood River office of the USFS for areas in and adjacent to the Sandy River Delta Park. Private landowners are currently being notified of upcoming project activities by letter and/or phone calls.

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

Signed: /s/ Kevin George  
Kevin George  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Date: August 3, 2015