

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

Memorandum

DATE: September 7, 2010

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Mark Kjelland
Project Manager – TEP-TPP-3

Proposed Action: John Day-Big Eddy No. 2 500-kV Transmission Line Reconductor

Budget Information: Work Order 232282 Task 01

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions or modifications to electric power transmission facilities that would not affect the environment beyond the previously developed facility area including...tower modifications, changing insulators, and replacement of poles, circuit breakers, conductors, transformers and crossarms.

Location: Sherman and Wasco counties, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to reconductor 3 approximately 1-mile long sections of the John Day-Big Eddy No. 2 500-kV transmission line. The project involves removing the existing conductor from the John Day Substation Dead End to tower 2/1, from tower 9/4 to tower 10/1, and from tower 18/4 to Big Eddy Substation Dead End and replacing it with the upgraded conductor. Additional work includes replacement of conductor hardware, replacement of insulators, installation of spacers, and installation of vibration dampers.

Much of the construction for this project will occur within BPA's existing easements and access roads although some temporary access roads across fields will be required. Proposed activities include upgrading some small segments of existing access roads to allow equipment to pass, building some new temporary access roads across cultivated lands, and tensioning the new conductor at each end of each of the work areas.

BPA would build approximately 1.75 miles of temporary access roads to structures for construction. Roads would be designed for use by trucks transporting cranes and materials, excavators, drill rigs, supply trucks, and line trucks. Approximately 0.25 miles of existing access roads would be improved. The method of temporary access road construction would depend on the soil and weather conditions at the time of construction. If the ground is firm enough, vehicles and equipment will drive on the native ground disturbance with only minimal grading, if any. If conditions warrant, geotextile fabric will be placed over the native surface and crushed rock will be placed on top to provide a firm surface. Once construction is complete, any temporary materials will be removed and the land will be available for continued agricultural use.

The reconductoring project is proposed to begin on September 7, 2010.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a) (1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a) (2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211.

Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

Archeological surveys were conducted by BPA in the project area on July 28-30, 2010. One historic property (a wooden structure) and seven isolates were identified with the Area of Potential Effect. BPA is not proposing any work in the documented site, but will provide an archeological monitor to be on site during construction of the project. Therefore, BPA is making a determination of ***no historic properties adversely affected***. BPA sent letters and a copy of the cultural resources report stating the finding to the SHPO and to the Warm Springs, Umatilla, Yakama and Nez Perce Tribes on August 5, 2010. If any archeological materials are found, work will be immediately halted, and BPA archeologists, the SHPO and affected tribes will be contacted.

No Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species or their habitat are identified within the project area, thus there will be no effect to any listed species.

Only one potential wetland area was identified in the project area; however it was an ephemeral wet area that is crossed by an access road. A small amount of rock will be placed in the road across this area, but it will be well below any jurisdictional amounts.

This proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation. Environmental provisions to be adhered to for the project are attached.

/s/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: September 7, 2010

Attachments:
Provisions
Environmental Clearance Checklist

PROVISIONS

This categorical exclusion will meet the following environmental provisions:

- An archeological monitor will be on site during ground disturbing activities.
- If additional archaeological material is encountered during the construction of the project, the BPA archaeologist will immediately be notified and work halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed.
- All standard erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices will be used for any ground disturbance, new road work, and road maintenance.
- No in-stream work. Fueling and vehicle maintenance should not take place where any spilled material may enter any natural or manmade drainage conveyance including ditches, catch basins and pipes. Drip pans and absorbents pads will be placed under all leaking construction equipment.

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: John Day-Big Eddy No. 2 500-kV Transmission Line Reconductor

Project #: (Work Order #, Task#) 232282, Task 1

This project has been found to not adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect With Conditions
1. Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Archeological monitor required.
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: /s/ Douglas Corkran

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