

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: September 12, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

to: Steve Lowder
Project Manager – TESM-AMPN-2

Proposed Action: Rice Flats Electrode Site Maintenance and Inspection Project

Budget Information: Work Order #00219387

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

Location: The proposed project area is approximately seven miles southeast of The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to maintain and improve an electrode site on its Celilo-Sylmar transmission line. The proposed work includes inspecting three junction boxes and excavation of two trenches. The work would be conducted near Celilo-Sylmar No. 1 Transmission Line Structure 8/1. The project area is a two mile circumference, 50-foot-wide circle that passes through sections 4, 5, 8, and 9, Township 1 South, Range 14 East, Willamette Meridian (WM). The junction box inspection will require excavation of square pits measuring 12 feet (ft) on a side to a depth of four ft. The trenches would be excavated to inspect and perform maintenance on the electrode and would be 20 ft square and six ft deep. The exact location of the trenches are as-of-yet undetermined. They, and the pits for the inspection of the junction boxes, would be placed within a 50-foot-wide, two-mile-circumference circle centered on Structure 8/1.

The project area is in a rural farmland setting. It traverses the top and north face of an unnamed hill that is part of the rolling uplands south of The Dalles. The elevation on the hilltop is 1,410 ft above mean sea level (amsl) and is 1,120 ft amsl at the bottom of the hill slope. Slopes on the hillside are steep to moderately steep with the steepest faces approaching 45 degrees. The slope has been incised and contoured by local drainage. The drainage swales carry seasonal runoff. There are no perennial or intermittent streams in the project area or the interior of the circle. The primary soils mapped in the project area are included in the Dufur Series (Green 1982:19, sheet 21) that includes silt loam soils found in upland settings that formed in loess that contains an appreciable percentage of volcanic ash that mantles alluvium, colluvium, and sedimentary bedrock. Native vegetation associated with the soils included bunchgrasses, forbs, and shrubs. At present, arable lands within the project area comprise about 75 percent of the project area, are planted in winter wheat. The non-arable land was largely bare earth.

Site restoration: The crew will separate and store the topsoil, after the proposed maintenance work is completed the crew will fill in the excavation areas ensuring proper reuse the stored topsoil. The land owner/farmer will recondition the topsoil for continued farming.

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, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011). 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, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, 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, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

/s/ John Howington

John Howington
Environmental Scientist

Concur: /s/ Stacy Mason

Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 12, 2012

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Proposed Rice Flats Electrode Site Maintenance and Inspection Project

Work Order #: 00219387 **PP&A Project No.:** _____

Prepared by: John Howington **Routing:** KEP-4 **Date:** 9/7/12

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

Environmental Resources	No Effect	No Effect with conditions
1. Cultural Resources APE letters sent - June 1 st , 2012 APE SHPO Concurrence June 20 th 2012 Surveyed July 3, 2012 No Effect letter sent August 3 rd 2012 SHPO concurrence August 29 th 2012	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) Project area located in dry land wheat farm, no habitat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands Top soiling will me implemented	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water N/A	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting documentation in the official project file:
Effects Determination for Threatened & Endangered Species

Signed: /s/ John Howington

Date: September 12, 2012