

# memorandum

DATE: June 11, 2013

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Amanda Williams  
Project Manager - TEP-TPP-3

**Proposed Action:** Bell-Boundary Fiber Project

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.7 – Fiber optic cable

**Location:** Spokane and Pend Orielle counties, WA

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to install new fiber optic line along 90 miles of existing BPA transmission lines in Spokane and Pend Orielle counties in Washington (see Figure 1). It would extend from Bell Substation in Spokane, WA to Boundary Substation 8 miles north of Metaline Falls, WA. The fiber would be strung on the Bell-Boundary No. 1 transmission line and run through Sacheen and Cusick substations along the route.

BPA would install overhead fiber optic cable on existing towers or on fiber optic wood poles where additional support for the fiber is needed. Small sections of fiber would also be installed underground at the substations. Access road work would be needed in some areas to accommodate construction vehicles and equipment.

Proposed fiber installation activities would include:

- installation of approximately 90 miles of overhead fiber optic cable on existing
- installation of 31 new wood poles with guy wires
- temporary placement of 25 reel-puller sites
- installation of 31 vaults
- installation of underground cable at Bell, Cusick, Sacheen, and Boundary substations
- placement of crushed rock at 31 structure footings
- construction of two new access roads and two new approaches (700 feet total)
- reconstruction of 7 miles of existing access roads; restoration of 1.8 miles of ditches
- brushing and mowing along 1 mile of roadsides
- replacement of a ditch culvert
- placement of riprap along some portions of roadsides
- acquisition of existing non-BPA roads

Access road work would occur from August through September 2013. Fiber installation would occur between Boundary and Sacheen substations from September through November 2013, and between Sacheen and Bell substations from September through November 2014. Construction vehicles and equipment would include a helicopter to string the fiber; boom and bucket trucks for

installing the fiber optic wood poles; a one-ton line truck and trailer with the reel-puller; a small backhoe, cable plow, and/or bulldozer or trencher for soil excavation and burying underground fiber; and a road grader.

Temporary impacts from vehicle movement and soil excavation would total 52 acres. Permanent impacts from the placement of vaults, fiber optic wood poles, and new and widened roads would total 7 acres. Other impacts would include short-term disturbance from construction activities, including helicopter noise. In addition, the presence of another wire on Bell-Boundary No. 1 structures would be a small additional obstacle to bird flight. However, given the visibility of the fiber wire and the existing configuration of three horizontal wires on Bell-Boundary No. 1 (as opposed to vertical wires), the increased risk of bird collisions would be small.

**Review of Environmental Effects:** BPA found that the project may affect but would be unlikely to adversely affect two federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act: Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*). U.S. Fish and Wildlife concurred with this determination on June 4, 2013. Effects to these species would be minor and due primarily to potential temporary disturbance from helicopter noise during project construction (BPA\_AnalogRetirement\_&\_FiberProject\_BA\_2013). No federally designated critical habitat for either species would be affected at any of the sites. The project would have no effect to any other federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act, as documented in a No Effect Memo (BPA\_AnalogRetirement\_&\_FiberProject\_NoEffectMemo\_2013).

In addition, within the project area there are documented occurrences of bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), which is protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), which is also protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No construction activities—including the use of a helicopter—would take place during the sensitive breeding period between March 1 and August 31 in these areas.

**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.

Based on the provisions identified on the attachment, this proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above.

*/s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer*  
Kara Hempy-Mayer  
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

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

Date: *June 11, 2013*

Attachment(s):  
Provisions  
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions  
Project Vicinity Map

## **ATTACHMENT**

### **PROVISIONS**

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

#### **Land Use**

1. On USFS property, comply with all obligations and requirements set forth in the USFS land use permit and all other associated documentation pertaining to this project.
2. Comply with all Forest Orders pertaining to:
  - sanitation, including the proper disposal of human waste, and packing out everything packed in
  - pets, in that no pets will be allowed at the project work sites
  - food storage, in that all food must be stored in a bear resistant container on site half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise.
  - other orders that apply.
3. Provide a schedule of construction activities to all landowners/agencies along the corridor that could be affected by construction.
4. Restrict construction activities to the area needed to work effectively. All activities, staging areas, and vehicles will be kept within designated areas within the BPA easement and on access roads, unless otherwise coordinated with the underlying property owner.
5. Keep gates in as-found condition (opened or closed). Coordinate construction sequence with landowner so that livestock may be moved if necessary.
6. Avoid driving through field crops during the growing season when possible.

#### **Sensitive Species**

7. In the event any special-status species\* (including nesting migratory birds) are encountered that could be affected by project activities, the following actions should be taken:
  - Stop work in the immediate vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead and, if on USFS property, the appropriate USFS personnel for the Colville National Forest (see below for contact information).\*
  - Implement reasonable and prudent measures to protect the species found, if needed and safe to do so.
8. Avoid construction activities along the section of Bell-Boundary No.1 with documented occurrences of osprey nests when nests are occupied, likely between March 1 and August 15 (see Mitigation Implementation Table [MIT]). If work cannot be performed without removing the nest(s), or if additional nests are observed in, or adjacent to, the right-of-way, notify the BPA environmental lead.
9. Avoid construction activities within 1,000 feet of any occupied bald eagle nest between January 1 and August 15.
10. Do not remove overstory trees outside of the previously cleared right-of-way.
11. No aircraft are to be flown within sensitive areas between Bell-Boundary No. 1 structures 64-1 and 66-2 between January 1 and August 15. This includes a 1,000-foot vertical buffer (see MIT).

## **Cultural Resources**

12. Have a BPA-provided archaeological monitor on site for all ground disturbing activities at designated locations (see MIT). The contractor will be responsible for making arrangements for the monitor to be on site at the appropriate time.
13. In the event any archaeological or historic materials are encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:
  - Stop work in the immediate vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead and cultural resource specialist. Notify interested tribes, the landowner, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies.
  - Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
  - Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site and restrict access to the site of discovery.

## **Habitat**

14. After construction, promptly reseed disturbed ground.
15. Use a regionally appropriate seed mix according to the SWM, BMP C120 and C121 or as required by the landowner or land management agency while reseeding disturbed ground to reduce erosion and weed recruitment. On USFS property, use a seed mix approved by the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District. All seed is to be "Prohibited and Restricted Noxious Weed Free for the State of Washington." Provide a copy of the tag from the seed mix proposed for use to the USFS prior to seed application.
16. Use only certified weed-free mulch, erosion and sediment control materials, and gravel. On USFS property, materials must be approved by the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District.
17. Reduce the risk of spreading noxious weed seeds by cleaning equipment with high-pressure water or air prior or use wheel washes when moving from one work site to another, particularly when leaving an area infested with noxious weeds.
18. Notify the BPA environmental lead as to the location of the noxious weeds.

## **Water Quality, Air Quality, and Soils:**

19. Utilize appropriate erosion and sediment control best management practices for the protection of water resources.
20. Maintain appropriate emergency spill response materials on-site to control unexpected and unanticipated releases of petroleum-based products or other hazardous materials. Disposal of any spill material will be in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements.
21. In the event of a reportable spill or release to the environment, immediately notify the KEP environmental lead and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, including the Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District if on USFS property.

## **Noise and Public Health and Safety**

22. Limit construction to daytime hours for noise abatement.
23. No equipment with unmuffled exhaust is allowed. Fit all equipment with sound-control devices that are as effective as the original equipment.
24. Equip vehicles with fire suppression equipment, including a shovel, fire extinguisher, and bladder or water supply.

**\*Contacts:**

KEP Environmental Lead

Oden Jahn, 503-230-7501

KEC Cultural Resource Lead

Elizabeth Oliver, 503-230-7554

Colville National Forest, Sullivan Lake Ranger District (USFS)

Karen Nooney, 509-684-7189

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***Special-Status Species List:***

Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*)

Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*)

Woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*)

Nesting raptors such as bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

# Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Bell-Boundary Fiber Project

Work Order #: 291638

**This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.**

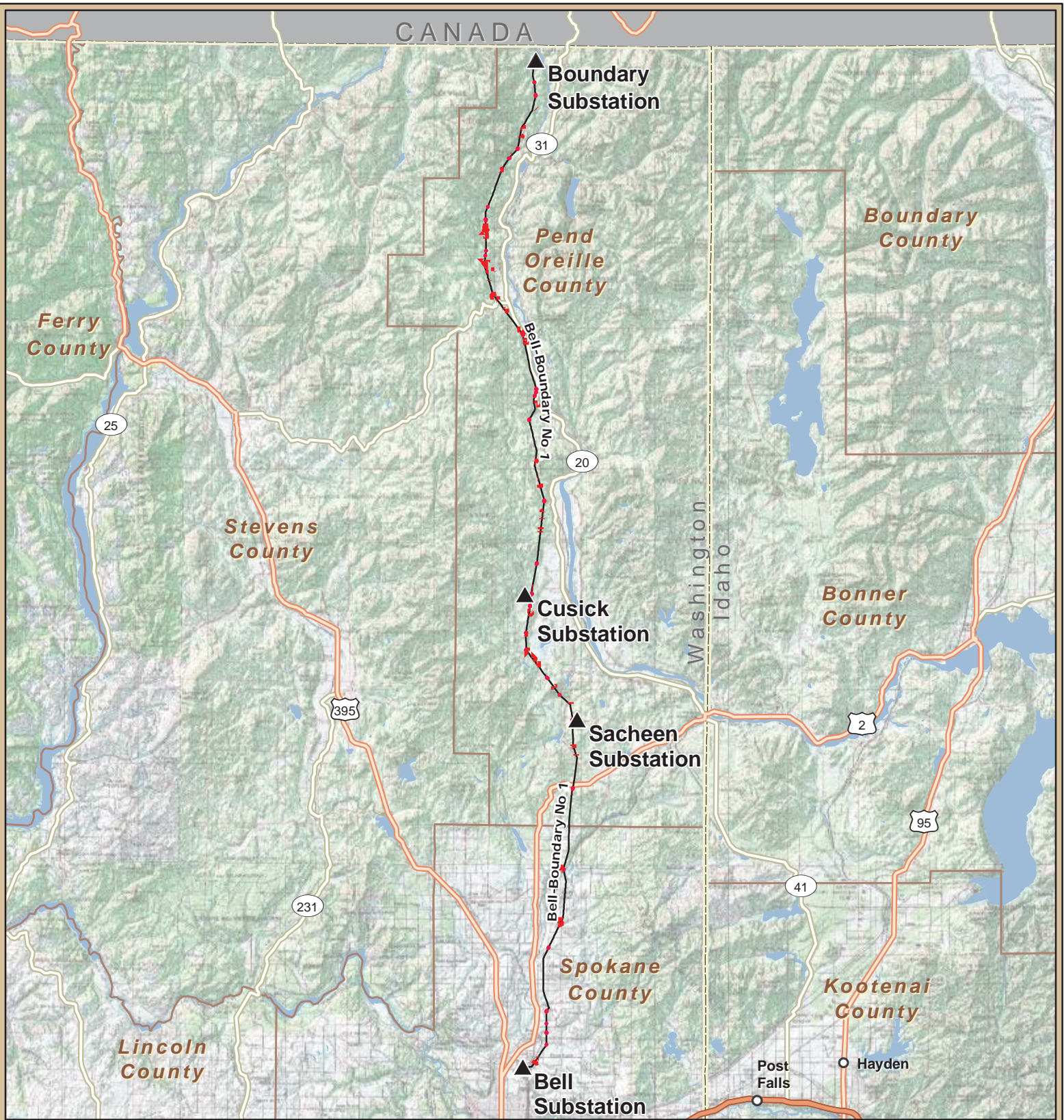
Environmental Resources	No Potential for Significance	No Potential, with Conditions (describe)
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources No effect determination based on review, survey, and consultation with DAHP and Tribes: received concurrence from DAHP on May 16, 2013.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) May affect, not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx and grizzly bear from construction disturbance: USFWS concurrence was received on June 4, 2013. No critical habitat or other federally listed species would be affected by the project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands No work is being done in a floodplain. Wetlands occur within the project area but are being avoided.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation None present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety Workers would follow BPA standards for health and safety during construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands Prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and prime farmland if irrigated all occur in the affected area, particularly in Spokane County and near Cusick and Newport, WA, in Pend Oreille County. However, negligible amounts of farmland would be affected in any one area by fiber optic wood poles, vaults, and/or roads.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water None present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe) Bald and Golden Eagle Act and Migratory Bird Act: bald eagle and osprey nests are documented near the project area along the northern portion of the line, and osprey nests occur on structures within the Bell-Boundary right-of-way. Construction in these areas will take place in September-November, outside of the sensitive nesting period.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Supporting Documentation:**




- BPA\_AnalogRetirement\_&\_FiberProject\_NoEffectMemo\_2013
- BPA\_AnalogRetirement\_&\_FiberProject\_BA\_2013
- Literature Review and Archaeological Resources Field Survey for the Bell-Boundary Fiber Project, Spokane and Pend Oreille Counties, Washington

Signed: /s/ Kara Hempy-Mayer

Date: June 11, 2013



Area of Potential Effect Map  
**Bell-Boundary Fiber: Reels, Wood Poles with Guys, and Vaults**  
 Spokane and Pend Oreille Counties, WA.

-  Area of Potential Effects
-  BPA Substations
-  Bell-Boundary No. 1



Oct 22, 2012

