

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: April 29, 2004

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP/Celilo

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Kirk Robinson
Project Manager – TNP-TPP-3

Proposed Action: Transmission Line Upgrade

Budget Information: Work Order #

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

B1.3, Routine maintenance activities...for rights-of-way, infrastructures (such as roads)...required to maintain...infrastructures...in a condition suitable to be used for its designated purpose.

B1.13 Construction...of...short onsite access roads....

B4.13, Reconstruction of powerlines approximately less than 20 miles in length....

Location: The proposed project is located in Bonneville and Bingham Counties, Idaho, in the BPA Idaho Falls Region. The project activities would be conducted along the right-of-way (ROW) of the Swan Valley- Goshen 115 kV transmission line corridor from the Swan Valley Substation and ahead on line for 25 miles. The ROW primarily crosses agricultural and pasture lands and open range.

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: The Swan Valley-Goshen upgrade project consists of rebuilding the line to 230 kV construction with 161 kV insulation. The existing wood poles have deteriorated and become unreliable because of age. Furthermore, the line is already operating at 161 kV with frequent flashovers due to its present inadequate 115 kV insulation level. The new 230 kV structures would be similar to the 115 kV structures but with increased phase spacing and longer insulator strings. The conductor would be reused and the aging insulators replaced with new porcelain insulators. All structures would be rebuilt to BPA standards. BPA Idaho Falls Transmission Line Maintenance crews would accomplish the line upgrade over the next three years.

BPA also proposes to perform routine road maintenance activities along existing access roads, both on and off the right of way. The maintenance includes: recurring maintenance to the roadbed and drainage, rocking, blading, installing water bars, installing drain dips, drainage culverts and/or other minor light road improvements. All work would occur in areas previously disturbed during initial installation.

Four new access roads totaling 2,100 feet in length would be constructed as follows:

- Tower 1/1, approximate distance 100 feet, plus a 20- X 25-foot Landing.
- Tower 11/3, Approximate distance 600 feet.
- Tower 17/7 – 17/7, approximate distance 1,200 feet.
- Tower 18/3, Approximate distance 100 feet

Environmentally sensitive resources: BPA received a Species List for the project area from USFWS on February 26, 2004. In response to Sec. 7 of the Endangered Species Act, BPA has prepared an Endangered Species Act Effects Determination for the proposed project finding that the project would have **no effect** on listed T&E species.

To determine if any wetlands are present within the project boundaries, BPA reviewed the BPA “T-View” database and conducted on-site review. The results of the reviews indicated a limited number of wetlands within the project boundaries; however, the scope of the project would not involve any work in or around these wetlands. Therefore, BPA has determined the project would have **no effect** on wetlands.

A review of public resource maps and an interview with the Fish and Wildlife Service were conducted to determine if any parks, public trails, wildlife management areas or other specially designated sensitive areas are within the project area. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the area between structures 1/1 to 4/6 is designated as big game wintering range. Due to the timing of the project and fact that the project would result in no net loss of habitat, BPA has determined the project would have **no effect** on the big game wintering range.

Although the project would be partially located on farmland, no additional farm land taken out of production. Therefore, even if these farmlands were designated as prime farmland, the project would have **no effect** on this sensitive resource.

No other sensitive or public resources were identified that could be potentially affected by the project.

Cultural Resources: The installation of the new poles would be slightly offset in a location that has been previously disturbed; BPA therefore determines the project would have **no effect** on cultural resources. Potential adverse impacts to cultural resources that may result from the access road portion of the project would be avoided by completion of a Cultural Resource Survey and commitments to appropriate mitigation—in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office—for any cultural resources that may be present.

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 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 Fed. Reg. 1512.2, April 24, 1992). Although the entire length of the of the project somewhat exceeds the "approximately 20 miles" identified in the applicable category of action (B4.13), the additional length is not significant relevant to environmental concerns. 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 non-permitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

/s/ Frederick J. Walasavage
Frederick J. Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney
Thomas C. McKinney
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 4/29/2004