

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration

**Casper-Red Butte Tap License Outgrant and Fiber Optic Installation
Natrona County, Wyoming**

- A. **Brief Description of Proposal:** Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to authorize a request from Rocky Mountain Power (RMP), a subsidiary of PacifiCorp, for license outgrants at Western's Casper Substation and Western's Casper Service Center in Casper, Wyoming. RMP plans to construct a new 115-kV Transmission Line with Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) fiber from RMP's Red Butte Substation (Red Butte) to a new tap on the jointly owned Western Casper-RMP - Casper Line structures. The electrical connection would be between two RMP lines and there is no interconnection with Western's transmission system. RMP requested to have Western study the tap on RMP's Red Butte - Western Casper - RMP - Casper's 115-kV Transmission Line. This tap configuration would create a RMP owned three terminal line between structures located on Western's Casper Substation, RMP's Casper Substation (RMP Casper), and RMP's Red Butte Substation. The tap will be located just outside of Western's Casper Substation. A three way tripping scheme between Red Butte, Western's Casper Substation, and RMP Casper will provide electrical fault protection using fiber optic lines for communication.

Western would issue RMP two license outgrants for RMP's facilities that would be located on Western's Casper Substation and Casper Service Center properties.

- (1) The first license outgrant would allow RMP to construct three structures along 375 feet of Western's Casper Substation land to support a small portion of its proposed two-mile-long 115-kV Transmission Line from its Red Butte Substation. The fiber optic line would then be routed from Structure 3/1 on RMP's line, through 190 feet of underground trench to RMP's communications panel inside of Western's Casper Substation.
- (2) The second license outgrant would allow RMP to install one structure on the western edge of Western's Casper Service Center compound to route fiber optic line from the RMP's Casper-Red Butte line to RMP's facility located in the Service Center compound. Approximately 406 feet of overhead fiber optic line will be routed on the west side of the compound and then routed for another 187 feet in underground trench to RMP's communications equipment located within the Casper Service Center. There would be an additional 485 foot trenched fiber optic located approximately 185 feet to the east of the first overhead and trenched fiber optic as a second fiber optic connection from the line to RMP's fiber patch panel within the RMP communications rack at the Service Center.

Additionally, Western will issue RMP a license agreement for crossing Western's easements on the Alcova-Casper North and South 115-kV lines at Structures 26/7 (north line) and 26/8 (south line). RMP will install fiber optic line through underground trench between RMP Structures 14/6 and 15/6. Additionally, Western will install underground fiber between RMP's 14/6 Structure and Western's Alcova-Casper North Structure 26/7.

- B. **Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied:** (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

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B4.9 Multiple use of Powerline Rights-of-Way.

Granting or denying requests for multiple uses of a transmission facility's rights-of-way (including, but not limited to, grazing permits and crossing agreements for electric lines, water lines, natural gas pipelines, communications cables, roads, and drainage culverts).

C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b): (See full text in regulation and attached checklist.)

(1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D.

For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements. To fit within a class, the proposal must not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders;
- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;
- 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;
- Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, State, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to, those listed in paragraph B. (4) (see Attachment A).

(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

(3) The proposal is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:

If the scope of work of this project changes, Western's Environmental Division must be contacted for additional environmental review.

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This Categorical Exclusion is valid for the 2015 field seasons after the signature date. If construction has not commenced within that time, Western's Environmental Division must be contacted for an updated environmental review prior to construction.

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, Western's Regional Preservation Officer shall be contacted, and the material evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

Western has a clean vehicle policy and all equipment used must be cleaned prior to use in order to prevent transporting of invasive plant or noxious weed seeds. Operators will be required to wash all machinery (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) before entering the action area and working on the project to prevent transport of non-native invasive species.

To comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, maintenance work should be scheduled outside the March 1 through July 31 general nesting periods. If the maintenance work is to be done during this period, contact Western's Environmental Division so that they may arrange for a pedestrian survey to be conducted in advance of the maintenance crews to identify active nests that are to be avoided.

Western shall exercise care to preserve the natural landscape and shall conduct this construction operation to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the natural surroundings in the project vicinity. Except where clearing is required for permanent works, approved construction roads, or excavation operations, vegetation shall be preserved and shall be protected from damage by Western's construction operations and equipment.

- E. **Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.


Signature

Date: 4/6/15

Gene Iley, Jr.
NEPA Compliance Officer
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by: Tim Snowden

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ATTACHMENT A

**Conditions That Are Integral Elements of the Classes
of Actions in Appendix B That Apply to This Proposal**

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources.		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.	NO	YES	Unknown
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities.	X		
(3) 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.	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally	X		

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recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:			
(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(ii) Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii) Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv) Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v) Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor;	X		
(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests; or	X		

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(5) 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 National Institutes of Health.	X		
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