

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Routine Transmission and Distribution Line Maintenance Activities  
Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**

***Project Number: 2019-009***

***Expires 11/14/2023***

**A. Brief Description of Proposal:** The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), conducts routine maintenance activities on existing transmission and distribution lines in seven states (Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming). These maintenance activities are part of the day-to-day operation of WAPA's infrastructure.

The following activities occurring **within RMR's existing rights-of-way (ROWs) and on RMR's documented access roads** are covered by this Categorical Exclusion (CX):

- (1) Ground and aerial patrols;
- (2) Inspecting and tightening hardware on wood and steel transmission line structures;
- (3) Repair of existing overhead conductor, optical ground wire (OPGW), and overhead ground wire (OGW), where pulling sites are not required;
- (4) Installation, repair, and replacement of OPGW splice enclosures;
- (5) Installation, repair, and replacement of aircraft warning devices, armor rods, bedrails, cross arms, dampeners, ground rods, ground spikes, insulators, jumpers, knee-braces, spacers, pole guards, structure mile markers, structure numbers, and x-braces;
- (6) Replacement or repair of steel members of steel transmission line structures;
- (7) Vegetation trimming, slash removal, and danger tree cutting by line crews using hand tools (e.g. chainsaws) where no brush piling and no off-road vehicular access are required;
- (8) Application of wood preservatives on existing wood pole structures;
- (9) Repair, replacement, or removal of existing fences and gates, where no new post holes are required; and
- (10) Stub an existing wood pole structure.

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

B1.3 Routine maintenance  
B1.11 Fencing  
B1.27 Disconnection of Utilities

B4.6 Additions and Modifications to  
Transmission Facilities

**C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR Part 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;

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- 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 Part 1506.1 or 10 CFR Part 1021.211.

#### **D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:**

- 1) **Activities not listed in Section A, Items 1 through 10, or activities that cannot be implemented while following all Special Stipulations in Section D, are not authorized to be completed under this CX. In these instances, the project proponent must contact RMR’s Environment Department to initiate the appropriate environmental review.**
- 2) This CX is valid until November 6, 2023 or until an updated version is executed by RMR’s Environment Division, whichever comes first.
- 3) All work must be conducted using existing access roads, landings, and pads. RMR’s Environment Department must be contacted prior to beginning work if construction or maintenance of access roads, landings, or pads is necessary in conjunction with any of the activities described in Section A, Items 1 through 10.
- 4) If any of the activities described in Section A, Items 1 through 10, will be conducted by helicopter, all landing zone and staging area locations must be provided to RMR’s Environment Department prior to beginning work. Additional surveys and review of the landing zones and staging areas may be required before work can proceed.

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- 5) If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100-feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, RMR's Archaeologist must be contacted immediately. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by RMR's Archaeologist.
- 6) If any possible human remains are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100-feet of the discovery area must halt immediately and RMR's Archaeologist must be notified immediately by telephone (no later than 24 hours from the time of discovery). A reasonable effort must be made to protect the remains from looting and/or further damage. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by RMR's Archaeologist.
- 7) Pesticide applicators must meet all state licensing requirements and must follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines. Applicators must use only EPA-registered pesticides that are approved for the intended use and location, and must follow all applicable label directions.
- 8) Transmission and distribution line components must be designed and constructed in conformance with the most current editions of *Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines and Reducing Avian Collisions with Power Lines*, both published by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) to minimize avian collision and electrocution risk while maintaining safe and reliable electrical service.
- 9) Activities involving the use of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other petroleum products must comply with RMR's Spill Response Plan (SRP).

**E. Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I have 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.

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Signature and Date

Brian Little  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region  
Western Area Power Administration

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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

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	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 Part 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR Part 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR Part 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
<b>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.</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-recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would	X		

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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 Part 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 Part 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		
(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		