

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



Western Area
Power Administration
Rocky Mountain Region

Proposed Action Title: Pleasant View-Ruin Canyon 24.9-kV Underground Cable Replacement

Location: Montezuma County, Colorado

Project Number: 2022-011

Expiration Date: December 31, 2027

A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to replace the Pleasant View-Ruin Canyon (PTV-RUC) 24.9-kV underground cable in Montezuma County, Colorado. The underground cable is the only power delivery system for the South Canal irrigation components and therefore is critical to maintaining reliable water deliveries by Dolores Water Conservancy District to its irrigation consumers. Due to the age of components, the cable has been subject to frequent faults which require replacement of cable segments. Ultimately, all segments of the 5.2-mile underground cable will be replaced to ensure consistent power delivery. Replacement will be completed by digging a trench to access the cable, splicing and replacing the cable, backfilling the trench using the same excavated topsoil, and restoring power. Equipment used for this project may include an excavator, utility trucks, wire pullers and tensioners, and cable reel trailers. Work will be confined to WAPA's right-of-way (ROW) on project lands managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The ROW will be accessed by existing access routes; no access road maintenance or new road construction is authorized.

B. STIPULATIONS PERTAINING TO PROPOSAL:

- 1) If the scope of work of this project changes, RMR's Environment Department must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.
- 2) **This Categorical Exclusion expires on December 31, 2027.** If all project work has not been completed by the expiration date, or if the need for an environmental compliance extension is anticipated, RMR's Environment Department must be contacted for an updated environmental review.
- 3) **Cultural resource monitoring locations are identified on maps to be provided to WAPA's maintenance crews and/or Contractor. A monitor is required for all ground disturbing activities within the cultural resource monitoring locations. An RMR Archeologist must be contacted at (970) 302-4753 or (970) 286-3523 at least 14 days prior to the start of work in these locations to arrange for a monitor. This stipulation may be waived with written documentation from an RMR Archaeologist if monitoring is deemed to no longer be necessary.**

- 4) If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and an RMR Archaeologist must be contacted immediately at (970) 302-4753 or (970) 286-3523. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR Archaeologist.
- 5) 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 an RMR Archaeologist must be notified immediately at (970) 302-4753 or (970) 286-3523 (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 an RMR Archaeologist.
- 6) Any injured or orphaned birds and all observed active nests must be immediately reported to RMR Environment at (970) 593-8803 or (970) 342-6462. Any dead birds must be reported to RMR Environment twenty-four (24) hours of discovery. Additional documentation, such as photographs and GPS coordinates, may be requested to support RMR's reporting requirements to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 7) To prevent the transport of non-native and invasive plants and animals, including noxious weeds and aquatic nuisance species, work crews must thoroughly wash all vehicles and equipment (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) before entering the action area and working on the project.
- 8) Activities involving the use of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other petroleum products must comply with RMR's Spill Response Plan (SRP).

C. NUMBER AND TITLE OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION BEING APPLIED:

(See text in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D.)

B1.3 Routine maintenance

D. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS 10 CFR 1021.410 (b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B of 10 CFR 1021.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not:

- (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of the Department of Energy (DOE) or Executive Orders;
- (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;
- (3) disturb hazardous substances;



pollutants; contaminants; or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (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.

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

The proposal has not been improperly segmented, and 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.

E. DETERMINATION:

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Signature and Date

James Wood
NEPA Compliance Officer
Rocky Mountain Region
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by:
Andrea Severson, Natural Resource Specialist
William Ankele, Archaeologist

