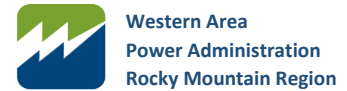


CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



Proposed Action Title: Sand Creek Switching Station Land Acquisition and Switchyard Construction

Location: Weld County, Colorado

Project Number: 2022-017

Expiration Date: December 31, 2028

A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to acquire 4.27 acres of privately-owned land for construction of the new Sand Creek (SND) Switching Station and associated access road in Weld County, Colorado. Once the land is acquired, the SND Switching Station will be constructed and WAPA's Erie-Hoyt (EE-HT) and Willoby-Sand Creek Tap (WBY-SND) 115-kV Transmission Lines will be sectionalized to increase reliability and safety.

Construction of the SND Switching Station will include clearing and leveling the switchyard and access road footprint; installing a grounding mat, foundations, a three-breaker ring bus, switches, metering equipment, fiber optics, control equipment, control building, security fencing, and gate; and graveling the switchyard. All or part of this work may be performed by a contractor using industry standard construction methods and equipment. This work will be confined to WAPA's acquired right-of-way (ROW) on private lands.

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, 2028.** 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) Land clearing for switchyard and access road construction must not occur until the RMR Engineering and Construction Department provides documentation to RMR Environment that coverage has been obtained under the Colorado Discharge Permit System (CDPS) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities, COR400000 (the Stormwater Construction Permit); or provides documentation that the State of Colorado has determined this construction activity is not subject to regulation under the Stormwater Construction Permit.

- 4) 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 within 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.
- 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, and an RMR Archaeologist must be contacted immediately at (970) 302-4753, (970) 286-3523, or (970) 658-6794. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR 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 an RMR Archaeologist must be notified immediately at (970) 302-4753, (970) 286-3523, or (970) 658-6794 (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.
- 7) Installation of equipment in switchyards must conform to WAPA's requirements and must be approved by WAPA. Oil-filled equipment, including bushings, must not contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB). In addition, oil-filled equipment must be permanently labeled by the manufacturer as No-PCB. Certification must be provided to RMR's Environment Department at or before the time of installation. Oil-filled equipment may require an oil spill containment system to comply with federal or state regulations.
- 8) WAPA Maintenance Staff or the Contractor, as applicable, must record quantities of SF₆ into Maximo, including:
 - a) Nameplate capacity in pounds of SF₆ gas containing equipment;
 - b) Pounds of SF₆ gas stored in containers, before transferring into energized equipment;
 - c) Pounds of SF₆ gas left in containers, after transferring into energized equipment;
 - d) Pounds of SF₆ gas purchased from equipment manufactures or distributors; and
 - e) Pounds of SF₆ gas returned to suppliers.

Scales used to weigh cylinders must be accurate to within +/- 2 pounds and must have current calibration sticker.
- 9) Vehicles and equipment (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) will not be moved between work areas without first taking reasonable measures to ensure they are free of soil, seeds, vegetation matter, or other debris that could contain noxious weed seeds.
- 10) 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.)

B1.24 Property Transfers

B4.11 Electric Power Substations and Interconnect Facilities

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

James Wood, Regional Environmental Manager
Rocky Mountain Region
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by:
Mark Suchy, Natural Resource Specialist
William Ankele, Archaeologist

