

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Captain Jack-Olinda Landing Zone near Tower 609 for Spacer Projects ⁺

Project No.: 100495358

Project Manager: Dean Faller

Location: Rural north-central Shasta County, CA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action:

Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of several federally owned and operated transmission lines throughout California, including the Captain Jack-Olinda (CPJ-ODA) line, located in northeast California. Part of this responsibility includes ensuring WAPA maintains reliable operation of the transmission system.

WAPA proposes emergency replacement of spacers on selected spans of its CPJ-ODA transmission line. To accomplish this task, WAPA intends to use a helicopter landing zone near the WAPA right-of-way (ROW) west of Tower 609 for landing and as staging areas. This area is on private property with permission from landowner.

Findings:

In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), WAPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, WAPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

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DALLDORF

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KRISTEN DALLDORF
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Attachment: Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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Project Site Description

The proposed landing zone is in rural Shasta County, California. The landing zone area is on disturbed land currently used as equipment staging by the landowner. The dominant habitat surrounding the project area consists of agriculture, currently planted in orchards. Anderson Creek is 0.15 miles south and the Sacramento river is 0.6 miles north.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

| Environmental Resource Impacts | No Potential for Significance | No Potential for Significance, with Conditions |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Historic and Cultural Resources <u>Explanation:</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The area proposed as a landing zone is located in a previously disturbed areas adjacent to road.. The use of this sites has no potential to affect cultural resources. Natural Resources will be contacted immediately if archeological, paleontological, or historic evidence is found.

2. **Geology and Soils**

Explanation:

Ground disturbance is not anticipated in this project; therefore, no impacts would occur.

3. **Plants** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation:

Reconnaissance surveys has been completed at this site.. No special-status plants are known or expected at the project sites. The landing zone site is disturbed staging area. Construction vehicles and equipment would be required to be clean before entering the project location to prevent spread of invasive weeds.

4. **Wildlife** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Explanation:

The Sacramento River and Anderson creek are nearby. Riparian habitat provides nesting habitat. WAPA conducted a desktop survey of the project area and found no resources of concern. Surrounding orchards and the nearby Anderson Creek and Sacramento River riparian corridors are likely to have migratory bird nesting activity if during proposed time frame for use of landing zone between March and September. Nesting surveys will be conducted up to 3 weeks prior to project activities and a 50 foot buffer (or 250 foot buffer for raptors) will be utilized for O&M activities if nests are located.

In addition, flight planning should include a conservation and safety advisory for raptor and larger birds at lower elevations (less than 1,00 feet) in and around the Sacramento River riparian corridor.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)

Explanation:

The project landing zone site is 0.15 miles from Anderson Creek and 0.6 miles from the Sacramento River. However, the landing zone site does not have any water bodies, floodplains, or fish. No impacts would occur.

6. **Wetlands**
Explanation:



The project area does not have wetlands; therefore, no impacts would occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**
Explanation:



Spill prevention measures, including secondary containment at the landing zone, for refueling if needed at the site, will be used during operations. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination. In the event of a hazardous material/waste spill, Environment and the COR will be contacted, WAPA Dispatch notified, and the appropriate Federal, State, and local regulating authority notified depending on the type and size of the spill

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**
Explanation:



The land use would not change at the project site. Nor is the landing zone within, or near, any specially designated areas. While the Sacramento River does provide habitat for critical species, it is 0.6 miles to the north and is highly degraded relative to its former condition. All refueling and equipment maintenance activities involving fluids, lubricants, and other spill hazards would avoid nearby creek and water conveyance canal, by 100-feet and utilize secondary spill containment.

9. **Visual Quality**
Explanation:



The visual quality would be consistent with the existing use of the transmission right-of-way corridor. There would be no significant change to the visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**
Explanation:



Air quality emissions would be from short-term helicopter use to and from individual towers and spans and exhaust from worker's vehicles along access roads. Air quality modeling emissions based on 1 day of work were within the emissions criteria for Shasta County AQMD. The contractor is expected to adopt WAPA's procedures during the project:

AQ-SOP-1: The Contractor will adhere to all applicable requirements of those agencies having jurisdiction over air quality matters, and any necessary permits for O&M will be obtained.

AQ-SOP-2: Machinery and vehicles will be kept in good operating condition and older equipment will be replaced with equipment meeting applicable emission standards; appropriate emissions-control equipment will be maintained for vehicles and equipment, per EPA and/or WAPA air-emission requirements.

AQ-SOP-3: Idle equipment will be shut down when not in active use; visible emissions from stationary generators will be controlled.

AQ-SOP-4: Dust –control measures will be implemented in road construction and maintenance, as needed. Trucks transporting loose material will be covered or maintain at least two feet of freeboard and will not create any visible dust emissions.

AQ-SOP-5: There will be no open burning of construction trash.

AQ-SOP-6: Grading activities will cease during periods of high winds (as determined by local air quality management districts).

AQ-SOP-7: Major operations will be avoided on days when the local Air Quality Index is expected to exceed 150.

AQ-SOP-8: Include dust-control measures such as water or chemical suppressants.

AQ-SOP-9: Re-seeding of ground surfaces that have been significantly disturbed to prevent wind dispersion of soil.

AQ-SOP-10: Regular watering of exposed soils and unpaved access roads during maintenance activities.

AQ-SOP-11: Use reasonably practicable methods and devices to control, prevent, and otherwise minimize atmospheric emissions or discharges of air contaminants.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

There are no residences within the project location. Helicopter noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or safety. Contractor shall be required to follow the OSHA standards set forth in 29 CFR 1910.269. Contractor shall also adhere to the requirements under Title 8 Cal OSHA Electrical Safety Order specifically Subchapter 5 and Subchapter 7. Contractor shall maintain a safe working distance from conductors as described in the above OSHA standards. If a safe working distance cannot be maintained, a clearance shall be requested 3 days in advance.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: WAPA would work closely with the landowner to provide adequate notification of construction timing.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

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