

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: Prineville District Office

NEPA Log #: DOI - BLM - OR – P060 - 2010 - 0034 - CX

Project/Lease/Serial/Case File #: OR-65813 (formerly OR-3471)

Proposed Action Title: Wasco Electric Coop – Maupin “G” Distribution Line

Location: The proposed project is to authorize a right-of-way (ROW) grant for the existing power line which expired August 9, 2007 (originally authorized under OR-3471). This authorization will be the same, with the exception of the proposal to relocate 29 poles which are located approximately 2 miles southwest of Maupin, Oregon (Poles located on BLM administered land are within WM., T. 5 S., R. 13 E., poles G26, G27 are in section 12; G41a through G45 are in section 13; and poles G46 through G54 in section 24. Poles G28 through G41 of the proposed realignment are on private land, but within a BLM easement which is for a road only. The BLM does not have the authority to issue a ROW for a power line within the easement.) The authorization would be located within the following described public lands.

Willamette Meridian

T. 1 S., R. 19 E., Sherman County.

sec. 17, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 18, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 5,448' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 5 S., R. 13 E., Wasco County.

sec. 12, lots 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9, and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 24, lots 1, 4, and 5, and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 25, lots 1, 4, 5, and 8;

sec. 36 lot 1, 2, 7, and 8. (Recon US. OR-53274)

The area described is 21,377' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 5 S., R. 18 E., Sherman County.

sec. 20, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 1,200' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 6 S., R. 13 E., Partially Surveyed. Wasco County.

sec. 1, lots 2, 3, and 8;

sec. 13, lots 18, 19, 20, and 22;

sec. 24, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 10,718' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 6 S., R. 14 E., WM. Wasco County.

sec. 6, lots 14, 15, and 16;

sec. 7, N $\frac{1}{2}$ of lot 2;

sec. 18, lot 5;

sec. 20, lots 10 and 13, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;
sec. 21, lots 2, 3, 4, and 7, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 22,450' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 6 S., R. 19 E., Wheeler County.

sec. 8, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 1,150' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 7 S., R. 14 E., Wasco County.

sec. 9, lots 3, and 4.

The area described is 3,575' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 7 S., R. 17 E., Wasco County

sec. 18, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 20, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 6,585' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 7 S., R. 18 E., Wasco County.

sec. 35, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, and NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 36, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$.

The area described is 10,797' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 7 S., R. 19 E., WM. Wasco County.

sec. 7, W $\frac{1}{2}$ E $\frac{1}{2}$;

sec. 18, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 31, lot 1, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 32, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 18,224' long x 20' (10' each side centerline)

T. 8 S., R. 14 E., Wasco County.

sec. 4, lots 4, 5, 6 and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 5, lot 1;

sec. 9, lot 4;

sec. 10, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;

sec. 21, lots 1, 2, 3, 4, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 15,500' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

T. 10 S., R. 17 E., Jefferson County.

sec. 20, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

The area described is 1,200' long x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide.

The total area described above is 118,224' long (22.4 miles) x 20' (10' each side centerline) wide (54.28 acres).

Description of the Proposed Action:

On January 8, 2009, Wasco Electric Cooperative, Inc. filed an application under Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761), as amended, requesting to renew their existing authorization No. OR-3471. This authorization expired on August 9, 2007. The application is now for a new grant (OR-65813) with proposed amendment to re-locate 29 poles. The electrical line is 7.2/12.5 kV. The total ROW would be 118,224' long x 20' wide (10' each side of centerline).

Because of the age of the line and numerous car-pole incidents along the river, the new alignment (2 miles) is proposed to be on the uphill side of the road for most of the route. In the new alignment, 12 road crossings will be reduced to two (2). The line will be removed from the day use areas that are popular with the river rafting users.

The poles would be single wooden pole with cross arm construction, with a three-phase power line. The existing poles are 35 feet tall with 29 feet above ground. The new wooden poles would be 40 – 55 feet tall with 34 – 38½ feet above ground. The ROW would need to be 20 feet wide, 10 feet each side of centerline. The poles are taller than the old poles because of increased clearance requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC). Wasco Electric is required by the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) to meet the minimum requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC).

Rock drills would be required to dig the holes and the auger on the rock drill will be 22-24 inches in diameter. The drill will grind the rock to obtain the proper depth of the hole. Utilities normally set poles at 2 feet plus 10% of the total height of poles 40 in length and longer. Poles shorter are set 6 feet deep. Again, poles for the project range from 35 feet to 55 feet in height. Poles come in 5 foot increments. The poles will be installed by a utility truck with a derrick mounted on it. The derrick will be of sufficient size to lift poles for setting in the holes.

Support trucks would be one-ton or smaller pickup trucks and material handling two-ton vehicles. Poles will be loaded on a trailer and towed to the job site by the line truck. The truck trailer combination would be road legal.

Wire would be installed by a special wiring pulling machine that is mounted on a 2-ton truck or special trailer and a tensioner that is mounted in a similar fashion. Each piece of equipment is placed at opposite ends of the section that has the wire being pulled. The pull rope on the puller is run the length of the pull from the puller to the tensioner. The wire is then pulled from the tensioner to the puller. Traffic control would be required for the wire pulling operation.

If approved, the authorization would be for 30 years and may be renewed.

The construction is proposed to commence in the Fall of 2011.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Two Rivers Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Date approved (ROD): June 1986

The proposed action has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the above listed BLM plan. Utilities and Transportation: states on page 32, "Applications will be reviewed on an individual basis for conformance with the Two Rivers RMP to minimize conflicts with other resources or users."

AND,

Land Use Plan Name: Lower Deschutes River management Plan (RMP)

Date Approved (ROD): February 1993

The proposed action has been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the Lower Deschutes River RMP. Other Resources and Uses: 4. Utility and Transportation Corridors, pages 51 and 52, "BLM lands will continue to be available for local rights of way, including multiple use and single use utility/transportation corridors following existing routes, communication sites and roads."

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 Departmental Manual (DM) 11.9, E. Realty, (12) Grants of rights-of-way wholly within the boundaries of other compatibly developed rights-of-way. (516 DM 11, dated 5/8/2008.)

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply. See attached CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation checklist.

I considered installation method, position of the power line on the two (2) miles of pole re-location (the remainder of the power line has been in place and operation continuously since March 1946), the visual affect of the re-location of the poles, the existing access route, safety and found that there would be no significant effect either individually or cumulatively on the human environment.

D. Signature

Authorizing official: *Susie Manages Acting for* *10-6-2011*
Molly Brown, Field Manager Date
Deschutes Field Office

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this review, contact: Pam Hart, Realty Specialist, Prineville Field Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754, telephone (541) 416-6783, or e-mail her at Pam_Hart@blm.gov.

| CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION | | YES | NO |
|---|--|------------|-----------|
| The proposed categorical exclusion action will: | | | |
| 2.1 | Have significant impacts on public health or safety. | | X |
| Rationale: All proposed activities follow established Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and safety. | | | |
| 2.2 | Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. | | X |
| Rationale: The existing power line and road are not within a park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands and moving the two miles of power poles along the wild or scenic river will improve the visual resource value. | | | |
| 2.3 | Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)]. | | X |
| Rationale: The proposed action is in conformance with the Upper Deschutes Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan Date approved (ROD): September 2005. The proposed action is in conformance with the above plan, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions, objectives, terms, or conditions. On page 29, under Rights of Way and Utility and Transportation Corridors, first paragraph states, "Public lands will continue to be available for rights-of-way, including multiple use and single use utility/transportation corridors following existing routes, communication sites and roads." The ROD/RMP establishes the land use allocation and goals for the affected lands; as such, there is no unresolved conflict regarding other uses of these resources. | | | |
| 2.4 | Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | | X |
| Rationale: Past proposed power line and road right-of-way grants have shown no highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique or unknown risks. | | | |
| 2.5 | Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | | X |
| Rationale: Power line and road right-of-way grants have been authorized for many years throughout BLM with various authorities. There is no evidence that this action has potentially significant environmental effects. This management activity does not commit the BLM to pursuing further actions, and as such would not establish a precedent or decision for future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | | | |

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| 2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. | | X |
| Rationale: The proposed action is specifically provided for in land use plan decisions. Similar past activities had no significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect. | | |
| 2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office. | | X |
| Rationale: Cultural clearances have been completed with no significant impact. | | |
| 2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. | | X |
| Rationale: The proposal is an existing power line and access road that has been used since 1946. The scope of the project would not change the overall habitat function or result in the loss of critical habitat. | | |
| 2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. | | X |
| Rationale: The proposed action conforms to the direction given for the management of public lands in the Prineville District ROD/RMP, which complies with all applicable laws, such as the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and others. | | |
| 2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). | | X |
| Rationale: The existing power line and road access would not affect low income or minority populations. | | |
| 2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007). | | X |
| Rationale: A cultural evaluation was completed for this proposal and no cultural sites would be affected. New pole locations would avoid all known sites. The project would have no affect to access. | | |
| 2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112). | | X |
| Rationale: If granted a term and condition of the ROW grant is that the holder is to control the spread of noxious weeds within the boundaries of the ROW grant for the term of the grant. Also if equipment is brought into the area it is to be washed prior to entering onto BLM land. | | |