

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Categorical Exclusion Not Established By Statute
DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2014-0044-CX**

February, 2015

Tinker Federal GU 2 Transformer ROW Amendment

Location: New Mexico Principal Meridian, Colorado
T. 34N, R8W,
Sec. 12, NE1/4SW1/4SW1/4.

Applicant/Address: **La Plata Electric Association, Inc.**
45 Stewart St.
PO Box 2750
Durango, CO 81302

Tres Rios Field Office
15 Burnett Court
Durango, CO 81301
p. 970-247-4874
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**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION FORMAT WHEN USING
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS NOT ESTABLISHED BY STATUTE**

A. Background

BLM Office: Tres Rios Field Office Lease/Serial/Case File No: COC-73896

Proposed Action Title/Type: Tinker Federal GU 2 Transformer ROW Amendment

Location of Proposed Action: New Mexico Principal Meridian, Colorado

T. 34 N., R. 8 W.,

Sec. 12, NE1/4SW1/4SW1/4.

Description of Proposed Action: La Plata Electric Association, Inc. applied for a right-of-way (ROW) to install an electric transformer on a concrete pad and a meter rack adjacent to an existing junction box. The transformer box dimensions are 60" wide by 40" long, 58" height. The concrete pad dimensions are 5' wide by 6' long and the meter rack dimensions are 26" wide by 28" long by 4' high. The proposal is entirely within an existing 15 kV electric distribution power line ROW, COC-73896.

If approved, LPEA would dig a trench out of the existing junction box to the new transformer location. The trench would be three feet in depth and approximately five feet in length and a foot wide. This trench would have the primary conductor resting in it.

A hole for the transformer would also be dug, which would be three feet in depth and approximately six feet by six feet wide. A transformer ground sleeve would be installed in the hole and the transformer would rest on top. The transformer is about four feet in height. The trench and hole would be dug using either a tracked mini-excavator or a rubber tired backhoe.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Date Approved/Amended: September 1985

The proposed action is in conformance with the referenced Land Use Plan (LUP), even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions): Record of Decision for San Juan/San Miguel Resource Management Plan, Page 20, states: "In general, public land is available for utility and transportation corridor development, however, applicants will be encouraged to locate new facilities within existing corridors to the greatest extent possible."

Land Laws and Policies. The lands program in the planning area is primarily concerned with the authorization of uses on the public lands by others, including private parties, state, county, and other federal agencies. The objective is to ensure compatibility of the various multiple uses with environmental protection of natural resources.

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E. Realty, 12, which states: "Grants of right-of-way wholly within the boundaries of other compatibly developed rights-of-way."

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 43 CFR Part 46.215 apply.

I considered that the project will be within the existing rights-of-way of the COC-73896 power line ROW adjacent to Tinker Federal GU 2 well.

D: Signature

Authorizing Official: _____



Date: 2-23-15

Connie Clementson
Field Manager
Tres Rios Field Office

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Jennifer Jardine
Realty Specialist
Tres Rios Field Office
15 Burnett Court, Durango, CO 81301
970-385-1224

Attachments

Tinker Well ROW Amendment Map
Tinker Well Site Improvement Photo

Categorical Exclusion Review Record

Resource	Yes*/No	Assigned Specialist Signature	Date
Air Quality	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Cultural Resources	No	/s/ Bruce Bourcy	11/18/14
Environmental Justice	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Floodplains	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Migratory Birds	No	/s/ Michael Schmidt	2/12/15
Native American Religious Concerns	No	/s/ Marietta Eaton	2/19/15
Threatened, Endangered, or Candidate Species	No	/s/ Michael Schmidt	2/12/15
Wastes (hazardous or solid)	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Water Quality (drinking or ground)	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Wetlands / Riparian Zones	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Wilderness	No	/s/ Jennifer Jardine	2/12/15
Other:			

* The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) apply. See below.

Environmental Coordinator /s/ Lindsey Eoff Date: 2/19/15

Exceptions to Categorical Exclusion Documentation

The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) apply. The project would:

Extraordinary Circumstances		
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		
Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: The project would not have any impacts on public health or safety. The project area is adjacent to a natural gas well pad and is not ordinarily accessed by the public. The power line would be buried and the transformer box would be locked to prevent access from the public.
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.		
Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no unique natural resources, unique geographic characteristics, historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments, or other ecologically significant or critical areas within the project area. Migratory birds may enter the project area, but there are no shrubs or trees to provide nesting habitat. Given the linear nature of the project area, it is unlikely the project would significantly affect ground-nesting migratory birds.
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102 (2) (E)].		
Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: The impacts of the action are well-known and have been demonstrated in other projects that have been implemented and monitored.
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		
Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: The proposed underground power line and transformer would likely have very predictable consequences that are well established as insignificant.
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principal about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		
Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: The proposed underground power line and transformer would not set a precedent for future actions that would normally require environmental analysis.
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		

Extraordinary Circumstances

Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: The proposed project is a modification of existing ROW COC-73896 and is directly related to the LPEA Electric Energy to Gas Wells, Mayhan Area (NEPA # DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2009-008), which allowed the installation of a 15kV power line to several gas wells in the Mayhan area on public lands. There would be no cumulatively significant environmental effects from these combined actions.
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7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.

Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: The area was previously surveyed. There are no historic properties, listed or eligible for listing, within the project area.
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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.

Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: No significant impacts to listed or proposed species or designated critical habitat are expected.
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9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: A Fish and Wildlife Clearance Report was prepared by Michael Schmidt, Wildlife Biologist, BLM Tres Rios Field Office, on February 12, 2015. This report found that no federally-listed species, BLM sensitive species, or Birds of Conservation Concern would be affected or impacted by the project. No federal, state, local, or tribal laws would be violated by the project.
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10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: No low income or minority populations occur within the proposed project area. The proposed project would have no adverse effects on low income or minority populations.
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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).

Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rationale: No sacred sites are known to occur in the area.
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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).

Extraordinary Circumstances

Yes	No X	Rationale: Ground disturbance, such as the trenching involved in installing the underground power line, can provide an opportunity for noxious weeds and non-native invasive species to spread. However, the area that would be disturbed is relatively small and linear (5 linear feet) and within a previously disturbed area. The concrete pad for the transformer would be installed on a well-graveled well pad. Given the small area of disturbance, it is unlikely that the project would significantly contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a BLM-approved seed mix upon completion of the project to prevent invasive species from becoming established and existing ROW stipulations require treatment of noxious weed species.
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