

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: PBS Site Investigations on North Bonneville-Ross Right-of-Way (*update to previous CX issued on October 16, 2019*)

Project No.: LURR-20190164

Project Manager: Charlene R. Belt, TERR-ROSS-MHQA

Location: Clark County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow PBS Engineering and Environmental, Inc. (PBS) on behalf of the City of Vancouver to conduct general site reconnaissance on BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW) in Clark County, Washington. Project activities would include:

- A geotechnical investigation using a track-mounted drill and a support pickup truck to collect a deep boring (6-inch diameter) in up to 4 locations within the ROW.
- A wetland delineation of the entire ROW using a hand auger and/or a shovel to examine soils up to 24 inches deep.
- A pedestrian archaeological survey of the entire ROW to identify cultural resources on the ground surface.
- General site walks of the entire ROW, including to identify and mark existing underground utilities.

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), BPA 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, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel February 22, 2021

Sarah T. Biegel

Date

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): 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.

Proposed Action: PBS Site Investigations on North Bonneville-Ross Right-of-Way (*update to previous CX issued on October 16, 2019*)

Project Site Description

The project area is located on BPA fee-owned portions of the North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 and No. 2 transmission line right-of-way (ROW), between structure 32/3 and Interstate-205, in Vancouver, Washington (Section 28, Township 2 North, Range 2 East). The project site consists of two noncontiguous BPA fee-owned parcels, separated by a portion of ROW that is owned by Clark County and therefore excluded from the project site. The project site is maintained free of tall trees and is dominated by a mix of low-growing native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species. A small network of informal dirt trails is located within the ROW as well as two driveways, a gravel parking lot, NE 97th Avenue, and NE 107th Avenue. Urban residential development abuts the ROW to the north and the south. Although an unnamed headwater tributary of Burnt Bridge Creek is mapped within the project site, no surface water or wetlands were observed at the time of the site visit (May 2019).

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA completed background research and an intensive field survey of the proposed project area. No previously recorded archaeological resources were located in the project area, and the archaeological field survey similarly found no archaeological resources. Two historic properties were identified within the ROW: the North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 and No. 2 transmission lines. However, the proposed activities would not diminish any of the standards under which they are considered eligible and would not result in an adverse effect. Therefore, the proposed undertaking has been determined to have no adverse effect to historic properties.

BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties:

- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
- Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP)

DAHP concurred with BPA's determination, and no other comments were received.

Notes:

- Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the Environmental Protection Specialist should be notified immediately.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor soil compaction from vehicle and heavy equipment use would occur within the project area. Ground-breaking activities would include deep boring for the geotechnical investigation and auguring or shoveling for the wetland delineation. The geotechnical boring samples would be taken to an offsite lab for analysis, the excavated holes would be backfilled with bentonite, and any remaining cuttings would be distributed around the bore sites. For the wetland delineation, soils would be temporarily excavated, examined on-site, and immediately replaced in the excavated hole.

Notes:

- PBS and its contractors would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project-related activities (e.g. vehicle and equipment use, boring, and auguring) would cause removal of vegetative cover in small areas. No additional tree or vegetation removal is proposed. There are no document occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), and no such species or suitable habitat were identified during a site visit (May 2019). Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during the site investigations. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA, and no such species or suitable habitat were identified during the site visit (May 2019). Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The closest documented occurrences of any state special-status fish species or fish species protected under the Federal ESA are within Burnt Bridge Creek, which is located over 2,500 feet from the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

Notes:

- PBS and its contractors would implement erosion and sediment control BMPs to help prevent transport of sediment off-site.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped wetlands. PBS and its delegates would conduct a wetland delineation, prior to the geotechnical investigation to identify the location

and extent of any wetlands in the ROW. The wetland delineation would be done using either a shovel or a hand auger to examine soils between 16 inches and 24 inches below the surface.

Notes:

- If wetlands are present, PBS and its delegates would not collect the geotechnical boring within any wetlands.
- PBS and its contractors would implement BMPs for temporary erosion and sediment control.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: PBS and its delegates would conduct a geotechnical investigation to determine the depth to groundwater. This single bore hole would be backfilled with bentonite to prevent any potential contaminants from entering groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change to land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change to visual quality at the project site.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area during the investigations. There would be no long-term changes in air quality following completion of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project-related activities (e.g., vehicle and equipment use and increased human presence) would produce temporary noise during daylight hours. There would be no long-term changes in noise levels following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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: N/A

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

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project site is BPA fee-owned. Adjacent land owners and ROW easement lessees would be notified of the upcoming project by BPA. Additionally, the Land Use Agreement would direct PBS to coordinate with landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette February 22, 2021
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT