

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Swan Valley – Teton Transmission Line Access Road Improvement

Project No. (if applicable): 4347

Project Manager: Ryan Martin, Project Manager – TELF-TPP-1

Location: Teton Counties, Idaho and Wyoming.

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform routine maintenance activities on the access road serving Swan Valley – Teton Transmission Line near structures 21/1, 22/5, 22/6, and 30/6 to 30/7. The proposed work is necessary to preserve and repair the existing road, maintain roadway safety, and manage storm water run-off.

The work would include approximately 175 linear feet of access road reconstruction from structures 22/5 and 22/6, 160 linear feet of reconstruction at structure 21/1, and 1,170 feet of new access road construction with seven vehicle turn outs from structures 30/6 to 30/7. The existing road from 30/6 to 30/7 would be abandoned due to an unsafe steep grade. The abandoned road would be restored and seeded.

The projects would include reshaping, grading, and compacting existing road surface as well as hauling, placing, and shaping of crushed rock. General equipment used for this type of roadwork includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, and dump trucks. The above described efforts are proposed for construction in summer of 2021.

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, July 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/ Frederick Walasavage
Frederick Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel Date: January 27, 2021
Sarah T. Biegel
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: Swan Valley – Teton Access Road Improvement

Project Site Description

The project activities would be conducted on BPA transmission line right-of-way. The site is located on USFS land. Adjacent land uses consist of forest management. The project area is mountainous with vegetation on the right-of-way consisting of primarily steppe shrubs and grasses. Adjacent areas are timbered.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership/Land Use
Swan Valley - Teton	21/1, 22/5, 22/6	3N	46E	30, 32	Teton, Idaho	USFE Targhee National Forest
	30/6-30/7	41N	17W	19	Teton, Wyoming	USFE Teton National Forest

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On May 13, 2020, BPA submitted a Determination of No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties to the Idaho SHPO, the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, and the Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation. On September 23, 2020, the Idaho SHPO provided its concurrence with the determination of No Adverse Effect. No response was received from the other consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during access road construction activities. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plants are present. Project activities would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species were identified within the project area. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited to the already impacted transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the transmission line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected in the long term.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission system rights-of-way and access road.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission system and to maintain power delivery in the region.

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: BPA Realty would notify and coordinate with the landowner in advance of the construction of the proposed project. The USFS was given advance notice of the project during the 2020 USFS/BPA annual coordination meeting.

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

Signed: /s/ Frederick Walasavage

Frederick Walasavage

Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: January 27, 2021