

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: C-Bow Property Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Project No.: 2011-003-00; BPA-012397

Project Manager: Tory Bohlen – EWU-4

Location: Lane County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund the Greenbelt Land Trust to purchase C-Bow which is a 1,583-acre parcel of land located immediately east of Coburg in Lane County, Oregon. BPA would hold a conservation easement to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat. BPA would also provide stewardship funds toward maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement of the conservation easement to the Greenbelt Land Trust.

This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's commitments made in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration".

The property primarily consists of oak woodland, grassland, fir transitioning to late successional mixed fir forest, and riparian areas. The Greenbelt Land Trust would develop a land management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property. The land management plan would be drafted within 18 months of closing. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

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/ Israel Duran
Israel Duran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>August 9, 2023</u>
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: C-Bow Property Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Project Site Description

The 1,583-acre C-Bow property located in Lane County, Oregon is currently privately owned, and BPA would fund the stewardship and purchase by the Greenbelt Land Trust at closing. Located near Coburg, the property is located entirely within the Coburg Hills. Prior to the settlement era beginning in the mid-1800s, this property was predominantly savanna habitat. This condition was well documented by early settlers and the Government Land Office surveys of the 1850s. According to historical aerial photography (dating back to 1936), this property has been in mixed use of grazing lands in the lower elevations and forestland generally in the higher elevations throughout the 1900s. The current landowners purchased the property in 2006 and have prioritized weed treatment, road maintenance and leasing the property for grazing as the primary activities conducted on the property.

C-Bow is comprised of a remarkably diverse set of habitats as the property ranges from the Willamette Valley floor (476 ft in elevation) up to the top of the ridge (2,257 ft in elevation), and connects two ecoregions, the Willamette Valley and the West Cascades. The property supports four major habitat types: oak woodland, mixed conifer forest, grasslands, and riparian habitats, including the Muddy Creek headwaters. Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus oreganus*) is the only Endangered Species Act (ESA)-Listed species known to occur on the property. However, the property does provide refuge for Oregon Conservation Strategy species such as western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*), chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerine*), pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), purple finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), and willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*).

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the conservation easement acquisition, which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement and stewardship funding. To the extent that future activities on the property may have an effect, it is expected that the Greenbelt Land Trust would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above

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: Notification letters would be sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties at a minimum of 15 days before the closing date (proposed closing date September 20, 2023) of the sale. Advertisements would also be posted in local newspapers, and information would be posted on BPA's public website prior to closing.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran

Environmental Protection Specialist

August 9, 2023

Date