

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** 2019 Schultz-Raver No. 3 Access Road Maintenance Project

**PP&A No.:** 4001

**Project Manager:** Richard Ross, TELF-TPP-3

**Location:** King County, WA

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) plans to perform routine road maintenance to improve approximately 2.8 linear miles of existing access road for the Schultz-Raver No. 3 transmission line, between towers 47/5 and 51/5 in King County, Washington. Access road work would include adding two ditch reliefs, seven drain dips, two cross-drain culverts, replacing six stream culverts, and performing minor blading, shaping, grading and adding rock to approximately 9,018 feet of existing serviceable access and structure spur roads. General equipment used for this type of project includes: graders, rollers, excavators, and dump trucks.

**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/ Chad Browning*

Chad A. Browning

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 19, 2019

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:** 2019 Schultz-Raver No. 3 Access Road Maintenance Project

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## Project Site Description

Proposed maintenance activities are located in two segments of access road for the Schultz-Raver No. 3 Transmission Line, between structures 47/5 and 51/5 in eastern King County, WA. The project area is located in a section of BPA's transmission line that runs parallel to the north side of Sunday Creek, approximately 1.6 miles away from the confluence with the Green River. Land use in the surrounding area consists of public and private timber land. Elevations (above mean sea level) within the project area range from 1,859 to 2,112 feet, with an average elevation of 1,963 feet. The project extends across six small, unnamed tributaries of Sunday Creek.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Historical Research Associated, Inc., conducted a cultural resource investigation for the project area on November 14, 2016. No cultural resources were identified during the survey. The Washington Department of Archaeology &amp; Historic Preservation (DAHP) provided concurrence on a Determination of No Historic Properties Affected on July 6, 2017.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, BPA would stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; DAHP; and the appropriate local, state, and Federal agencies. BPA would implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering, and take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would occur within and adjacent to the unnamed Green River tributary. An area approximately 194 feet long by 20 feet wide would be disturbed along the length of the tributary. This includes removal of the existing 30-foot-long by 48-inch-wide culvert, regrading the channel to match grades at the up and downstream extent of the project, adding streambed gravel, and installing a new 50-foot-long by 16-foot-wide bridge.</p> <p>The unnamed Green River tributary would be isolated and bypassed during construction to minimize turbidity.</p> <p>Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded. Areas around the unnamed Green River tributary would be planted with native shrubs. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.</p>		

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



Explanation: Vegetation removal would be limited to those areas within the disturbance footprint along the banks of the unnamed Green River tributary as described in the Soils section above. No Federal or state special-status plant species are mapped within the project area. All areas of soil disturbance would be reseeded and areas along the Green River tributary would be replanted. Vehicles and equipment would be washed prior to entry into the project area to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.

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



Explanation: Potential suitable habitat for northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet is located near the project area. The Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest staff prepared a Biological Evaluation with a may affect, not likely to adversely affect determination for northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, using the Programmatic Consultation for Forest Activities between USFWS and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (USFWS 2002) as extended and revised on December 18, 2007, and extended on March 23, 2010. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the Biological Evaluation and provided a consistency approval on March 14, 2017. No timing restrictions are required.

No suitable habitat is present in the project area for other listed wildlife species. Low-quality habitat typical of the area would be disturbed.

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



Explanation: A culvert replacement with a bridge is proposed over the unnamed Green River tributary. No listed fish species currently have access over Howard Hansen Dam, located downstream of the project area. However, the tributary provides Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

BPA received approval from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on June 12, 2018, for take coverage under BPA's Standard Local Operating Procedures Biological Opinion (BO) for impacts to EFH. Compliance with all terms and conditions of the BO is required, including fish capture and release.

Construction below and in the vicinity of the ordinary high water mark of the unnamed tributary to the Green River would be conducted after temporary isolation and bypass measures have been installed and fish salvage has been completed. The proposed 60-foot bridge span has been designed to exceed 1.5x the average active channel width of 5.5 feet. In addition, the proposed construction would occur during the approved In-Water Work Window (July 1-September 30) to minimize impacts on non-listed fish species. An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would be prepared and adhered to during construction. All disturbed areas would be restored post-construction with native seed and/or shrubs, and streambed gravels would be added within the tributary's disturbance footprint.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc. conducted a wetland delineation on June 6, 2016. No wetlands were mapped within the project area. No National Wetland Inventory wetlands or hydric soil units overlap the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of groundwater proposed.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No land use changes are proposed; no specially-designated areas have been identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All improvements would be at ground level and are limited to existing road prisms and the area immediately surrounding the transmission lines. Access roads would visually match existing roads.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar air quality impacts during project construction are expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise from typical utility line equipment would be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. In fact, the proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power 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, if necessary:

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

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: A portion of the proposed action is located on land owned by Tacoma Water. Tyler Patterson, Tacoma Water Natural Resource Biologist II, was contacted February 26, 2016. Mr. Patterson provided history and background of fisheries species in the watershed. He recommended work during the July 1-September 30 in-water work window but provided no additional requests. The other portion of the project is on USFS (Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie) land. After several months of interagency coordination, the USFS issued a NEPA Letter of Concurrence dated July 2, 2018. All USFS requests have been met and BPA would continue to update both landowners through project completion.

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

Signed: /s/ Chad Browning  
Chad Browning, EPR-COVINGTON  
Environmental Scientist

Date: April 19, 2019