

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Ellensburg-Moxee Transmission Line Access Road Improvements

PP&A No.: 3999

Project Manager: Donna Martin – TELF-TPP-3

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

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 road maintenance, repair, and improvements on approximately 1,650 linear feet of access road. Improvements would include installation of a gate, drain dips, one landing, and one drainage culvert. Approximately 200 feet of new access road would be constructed, connecting BPA's access roads to Shushuskin Ridge Road which is a paved private road to the south of structure 5/6. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing infrastructure and roadway safety and to increase efficiency of transportation.

All proposed work would occur within the existing, vegetated right-of-way (ROW) corridor on steep terrain with sage steppe vegetation. The areas of improvement would be accessed using the existing BPA access roads, though equipment and personnel may be required to traverse off-road for staging. BPA crews would also be constructing approximately 200 feet of new access road. All work would be completed on privately-owned land within the BPA ROW. Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of the following: dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, and work trucks. All disturbed areas would be restored at the end of the project.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Date: *June 18, 2019*

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: Ellensburg-Moxee Transmission Line Access Road Work

Project Site Description

The proposed project would be conducted on mile 5 of the Ellensburg-Moxee No. 1 line. The area requiring improvement is located within BPA easement on privately-owned land and the surrounding land use is rural residential. The majority of the work would be completed on the existing access road, with 200 feet of new road construction. The project area is moderately steep with sagebrush steppe vegetation.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist and reviewed by Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). No cultural resources were identified during the survey. DAHP concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on May 6, 2019.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, 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. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The improvements would likely conserve soil resources by reducing ponding and soil erosion within the roadway. Erosion control measures and best management practices would be used. Any disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be reseeded with a suitable seed mix to stabilize any disturbed vegetative areas. Stabilization would include: roughening of soils, seeding with an appropriate native erosion control seed mix, using slow release fertilizer, and mulch. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. The construction of the 200 feet of new access road and the landing would not create 5,000 square feet or more of impervious surfaces; therefore, runoff treatment would not be required by the stormwater manual for western Washington. Therefore, there would be no significant impact to geology and soils.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no Federal/state special-status species in the project area.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.</p>		

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

Explanation: No in water work is proposed for this project and there are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. The access road is located in a valley, which drains to a canal approximately 500 feet to the east of structure 5/4. Erosion control measures would be used to prevent off-site sediment migration and a non-regulatory erosion control plan (ECP) would be prepared for the project. Therefore, there would be no effect to water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: A private drinking water well is located approximately 25 feet north of the proposed new road construction. Care would be taken to avoid damaging the well. Staging areas for equipment or materials containing petroleum, oil, or other potential contaminants would be kept a minimum 100 feet away from the well. Additionally, spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities.

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

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use. No specially-designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality of the area as a result of the proposed activities.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The project would have no significant impacts on air quality; however, a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: During project activity all standard safety protocols would be followed. A site-specific health and safety plan would be prepared and implemented to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to maintain roadway safety.

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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: All activities would be coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann
Emma Reinemann
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: June 18, 2019