

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Chief Joseph–Snohomish No. 3 & No. 4 & Chief Joseph-Monroe No. 1 Landing Zones/Access Road Work

Project No.: 4707

Project Manager: Brent Thompson - TFWF-SCHULTZ

Location: Chelan, WA

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 access road and helicopter landing zone maintenance in the Okanogan - Wenatchee National Forest. The project would entail minor road grading and filling to reduce ruts within the access road. The grading would not impact the native soil beneath the fill that exists on the road. New rock would be laid down on top of the road and would not exceed 3 inches in depth. Equipment utilized would include two dump trucks, 4,000-gallon water truck, water trailer for fire suppression, one backhoe, and two 550 diesel trucks.

The proposed action would maintain reliable power to the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 6, 2021

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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project area occurs in central Washington and is located adjacent to predominantly secondary growth forested lands. Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-ways, access road easements, and adjacent helicopter landing zone which are located on lands managed by the Okanogan – Wenatchee Forest.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project description for the WA 2021 090 Chief Joseph-Snohomish/Chief Joseph-Monroe Landing Zones/Access Road Work Project in Chelan County, Washington was reviewed by a BPA historian and archaeologist. The project is looking to lay down 3-inch gravels to level out several large ruts in the USFS Road 5303210, as the ruts currently present would prevent work trucks from reaching the Chief Joseph-Snohomish No. 3 and No 4 and the Chief Joseph-Monroe No. 1 Transmission Lines, and that beyond laying down gravels within the ruts on the road, no ground disturbing work (e.g. grading, blading, mowing, etc.) would be conducted.

The Chief Joseph-Snohomish No. 3 and No. 4 and Chief Joseph-Monroe No. 1 Transmission Lines are all historic, built environment resources, with energization dates of 1955, 1965, and 1972. All of these transmission lines are eligible for listing on to the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP). However, even though these lines are historic, eligible resources, the proposed project would have no potential to affect the integrity of these resources. As defined by the Multiple Property Document (Kramer 2012), insulator replacement is considered normal and in-kind repair work. Additionally, it is understood that no ground-disturbing work would occur during the laying down of rock. No cultural resources were identified within the USFS Road 5303210.

Therefore, BPA has determined that the project has No Potential to Effect Historic Properties. Should the current scope change, please contact the BPA historian and archaeologist as soon as possible.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during access road and landing zone leveling. 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 known Federal/state special-status plants are present in the project area. If necessary, vegetation would be crushed and left in place.

In addition, on National Forest System lands managed by the Okanogan – Wenatchee National Forest, BPA would comply with the Standard Operating Procedures for limiting the spread of invasive species and fire prevention as directed in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have minimal impacts to local wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to ESA-listed species or state sensitive species categorized as “Critically Imperiled” or “Imperiled”.

Notes: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitat.

- Drive on existing access roads.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Crush vegetation in place of removal.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. There are no fish in the vicinity of the project area. 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: No ground-disturbing activities are anticipated in wetlands or other water bodies that occur along the project. Erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sedimentation.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated due to the lack of ground disturbance.

Notes: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize groundwater contamination potential.

- Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located on vehicles, other equipment, and fly yards used on this project.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact existing land uses.

For those portions of the project crossing the Okanogan – Wenatchee National Forest, the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Bonneville Power Administration United States Department of Energy and the United States Forest Service United States Department of Agriculture Regarding Transmission Facilities and Access to Those Facilities on National Forest System Lands Standard Operation Procedures* listed below would be implemented:

- **Section V** Transmission Facilities
- **Section X** Fire control communication and coordination
- **Appendix E** Fire Prevention and Suppression

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have minimal impact to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which 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: 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 personnel and environmental specialists coordinated the proposed project activities with the Okanogan – Wenatchee National Forest prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities were addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz, EPR-Bell-1
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: August 6, 2021