

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Rocky Reach – Maple Valley Transmission Line Access Road Improvement Project

PP&A No.: 4139

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; B1.13 – Pathways, short access roads, and rail lines.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform routine road maintenance, repair, improvements and reconstruction on approximately 1.3 miles (7,000 linear feet) of access road. Improvements would also include installation of 2 gates, 2 landings, and approximately 7 drain dips and 5 water bars. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing infrastructure and roadway safety and to increase efficiency of transportation.

Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of the following: Dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, and work trucks. All disturbed areas outside of the road prism 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, 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/ Treicia Albert

Treicia Albert – EPR-4

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Date: July 1, 2021

Katey C. Grange

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: Rocky Reach – Maple Valley Transmission Line Access Road Improvement Project.

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in Kittitas County, Washington, in the BPA Wenatchee district. The project activities would be conducted along the 345kV Rocky Reach-Maple Valley No. 1 transmission line between structures 60/1 to 61/2. The project site is made up of grassland bordered by secondary forest on the BPA right-of-way surrounded by privately owned rural residential properties.

All proposed work would occur within the existing vegetated BPA right-of-way corridor. The areas of improvement and reconstruction would be accessed using the existing BPA access roads, though equipment and personnel may be required to traverse off-road for staging. A small freshwater pond is located just under a mile to the northwest of tower 61/2.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area was surveyed by BPA archaeologists on April 20, 2021 and reviewed by the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. No historic properties were identified as being affected during the survey. DAHP concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on May 19, 2021.

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.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Vegetation would be minimally disturbed (through crushing or removal) where existing access roads would be repaired and improved. The project area would not impact any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.

Notes: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize vegetation impacts:

- Drive on existing access roads as much as practical.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Utilize erosion and sediment control materials composed of certified weed free materials.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have minimal impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with ground disturbance, elevated noise, and human presence. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed species. No impacts to state special-status species or habitats are anticipated.

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 and there are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. Erosion control measures would be used to prevent off-site sediment migration and a non-regulatory erosion control plan would be prepared for the project. Therefore, there would be no effect to water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

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

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities.

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 land use. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minor changes to the visual quality of the area associated with the new gates and improved roads, but the overall visual character would remain the same.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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

Potential for Significance: No

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. Project activities would not impact human health or 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: 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: All activities have been coordinated with landowners.

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

Signed: */s/ Treicia Albert*
Treicia Albert – EPR-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: July 1, 2021