

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Willamette Valley 2021 Projects – Sorenson Fence Construction

Project No.: 2011-004-00

Project Manager: Hannah Dondy-Kaplan, EWM-4

Location: Lane County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to construct a fence along the southern boundary of the BPA fee-owned Sorenson Meadows property in order to protect a known cultural resources site and deter trespassers from entering the property. Funding for this work partially fulfills commitments made by BPA 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”. This is part of ongoing efforts to mitigate for the impacts to fish and wildlife from the construction and operation of Federal flood control and hydroelectric facilities in the Willamette River Basin.

Sorenson Meadows Fence Construction

In order to protect the Sorenson Meadows property and a pre-contact site that was identified during a 1998 cultural resource survey, ODFW proposes to install a fence along the southern boundary of the property. The fence would be installed in order to block potential trespass from neighboring parcels that could negatively affect the cultural and natural resources present on the property. Both rock jack fence and wood and wire fence segments would be installed on the property.

A rock jack fence approximately 375 feet in length would be constructed by filling wire gaibons with crushed rock to create columns. The gaibons measure roughly 3 feet in diameter and 4 feet tall and contain roughly 1 cubic yard of rock when filled. The columns would be constructed entirely on the soil surface and would not involve any major ground disturbance to construct. The columns would be connected with wildlife friendly smooth wire to form the fence. Following construction, any disturbed areas would be seeded with native seed mix.

Wood and wire fence segments totaling approximately 850 feet in length would be constructed along the portions of the property line to the east and west of the rock jack fence. The fences would consist of 6-foot-tall wooden posts driven approximately 2 feet into the ground and placed roughly 25 feet apart. Wildlife friendly smooth wire would connect the posts. H-braces made from cedar posts would be constructed at intervals along the fence line for additional support as

needed. A gate would be installed near the western end of the fence to allow access to the property by authorized individuals.

All construction would take place during the dry season when the soil is hard to minimize ground disturbance. Construction would be completed manually using hand tools and manual labor; no heavy machinery would be used. All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and small trailers would be used to transport supplies and building materials to the locations where the fence would be constructed. Ground disturbances from the use of ATVs would be minimal and consistent with past usage of the site for agricultural purposes.

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/ Thomas DeLorenzo
Thomas DeLorenzo

Concur:

<u>/s/ Katey C. Grange</u>	<u>September 7, 2021</u>
Katey C. Grange	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.

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Project Site Description

The Sorenson Meadows property is located about one mile north-northwest of Pleasant Hill, Oregon, directly adjacent to the Willamette River on the west and northwest at an elevation of about 500 feet above sea level. The site is bordered by private landowners to the east and south. The site is owned by BPA and maintained by ODFW. The site is roughly 45 acres in area and was historically used for agriculture. When the site was acquired by BPA, roughly 37 acres of the property were cultivated for annual ryegrass with roughly 8 acres along the bank of the Willamette River of remnant riparian forest. Due to restoration efforts undertaken by ODFW, the site is now a mixture of riparian forest, grass and shrubland, and forested wetland with ecology typical of the central Willamette Valley.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA identified an area of potential effect (APE) and conducted background research into recorded cultural resources and archeological surveys near the APE (BPA CR Project No. OR 2016 078). In conjunction with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (OSHPO) in 2018, BPA determined the extent of a pre-contact archeological site along the southern border of the property. BPA and ODFW modified the proposed fencing plan in order to minimize impacts to this site. On August 5, 2021, BPA made a determination that no historic properties would be affected by the proposed action as long as ground disturbance from construction activities do not extend deeper than 20 cm below the current ground surface in areas of the fencing overlapping the site. BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and OSHPO. OSHPO concurred with BPA's determination by letter on September 2, 2021. No other responses were received. The consultation period ended on September 7, 2021.

Notes:

- On segments of the fence that overlap with the identified archeological site, Sponsor would minimize ground disturbance from construction and not excavate deeper than 20cm. BPA has determined that the upper portion of the site has been previously disturbed by agricultural use of the area. Ground disturbance would not extend deeper than 20 cm below the current ground surface, therefore, the construction of the fence would be unlikely to impact cultural resources on the site, subject to an inadvertent discovery plan.
- In the event of inadvertent discovery of cultural resources during project activities, all work would cease, the area would be secured, and BPA archaeological staff and the consulting parties would be notified.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal impacts to soils are expected. The rock jack fence columns would be constructed on top of the soil during the dry season and would cause minimal ground disturbance. The wood and wire fence posts would be driven approximately 2 feet into the ground, but such ground disturbance would be localized solely to the location of the fence posts. Some minor disturbance of the top layer of soil in the work area may potentially be caused by human presence and use of ATVs during construction of the fence, but the effects would be localized and minor.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed or sensitive plant species present in the project area. There may be short-term negative impacts to vegetation from equipment and human presence while constructing the fence. No long-term effects are anticipated. Any disturbed areas of vegetation due to construction will be re-seeded upon completion of the construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ESA-listed or sensitive species present in the project area. Wildlife present on the site may be temporarily disturbed by human presence (sound, movement, shadows). These effects would be temporary, localized, and minor. The proposed fence would use wildlife friendly smooth wire and provide ample space for wildlife to pass through the fencing, causing no impact to wildlife moving between the site and neighboring properties.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: This project would have no effect on fish or aquatic species, as no segment of the proposed fence would be built in a water body.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the path of the proposed fence construction. This project would therefore not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wells or use of groundwater is proposed in this project. There would be no impacts to groundwater or aquifers as a result.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing land use would not change as a result of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The fence would be noticeable and have a negative impact on the natural visual quality of the area. However, the site is owned by BPA and managed by ODFW and is not publicly accessible, so impacts to visual quality would be minimal and would not impact the public.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to air quality are expected aside from temporary, localized, and minor exhaust from ATVs transporting supplies during construction. No long-term effects are anticipated.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Human presence and ATV use during project implementation would result in temporary, localized noise increases. These increases would not substantially impact the surrounding environment.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and 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: The property is owned by BPA and managed by ODFW. No external coordination is needed.

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

Signed: /s/ Thomas DeLorenzo September 7, 2021
Thomas DeLorenzo – ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist