

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Paul-Olympia No. 1 Access Road Improvement Project

PP&A No.: 3981

Project Manager: Rick Ross

Location: Thurston County, Washington

Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership
15N	2W	10, 11	Thurston County, Washington	Private Individuals and Companies
16N	3W	12	Thurston County, Washington	Private Individuals and Companies

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):

B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to perform routine maintenance along the access roads and structure spur roads of the Paul-Olympia No. 1 transmission line, between structures 4/1 to 5/3 and 12/4 to 12/5. To maintain access to existing towers and transmission lines, BPA is proposing to add one cross-drain culvert; clean two existing culverts; add four ditch reliefs, six drain dips, and five waterbars; perform minor blading, shaping, grading, and adding rock (improvements) to approximately 7,850 feet of existing serviceable access and structure spur roads; reconstruct approximately 275 feet of road; and clear and grub 275 feet of road. General equipment used for this type of project includes mowers, 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, 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/ Kevin George
Kevin George, BPA
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 4, 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: Paul-Olympia No. 1 Access Road Improvement Project

Project Site Description

Proposed maintenance activities are located in two separate sections of the access road for the Paul – Olympia No. 1 transmission line, near Maytown, WA. Topography within the northern section (structures 12/4-12/5 of the project) is generally flat with elevation above mean sea level ranging from approximately 250 to 290 feet, whereas the southern project section (structures 4/1 to 5/3) is sloped with elevation ranging from approximately 235 to 500 feet.

Alterations to vegetation, soils, and hydrology have occurred in the past within and around the project area. Native vegetation within the project has been removed in the past for construction and maintenance of the transmission line. Soils have been compacted and fill has been placed within portions of the access road prism running through the project area; however, the majority of access paths seem to be previously undeveloped. Runoff from the surrounding landscape drains naturally to tributaries of Skookumchuck River in the southern project section and Black River in the northern project section.

Land use within the project area consists of utility line corridor right-of-way and includes dirt and gravel access roads, steel lattice transmission towers, and associated electrical lines. Adjacent land use primarily consists of timber forest, agriculture, low-density residential development, and natural open land.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> On November 25, 2016, BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). DAHP concurred with the APE (2016-11-08469-BPA). A cultural resources review was conducted by Historical Research Associates, Inc. on January 17, 2017, for the project area; Washington DAHP concurrence on a Determination of No Historic Properties Affected was received July 5, 2017. The Nisqually Indian Tribe reviewed the report with no further concerns. No additional comments were received.</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>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would occur within the existing road prism and paths (8,400 feet long by 16 feet wide), at the cross-drain culvert, ditch reliefs, water bars, and drain dips, and at the two culverts that would be cleaned. Due to wet soil conditions, work would occur during the dry season (May-September). Best Management</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Practices (BMPs) would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation: Vegetation removal would be limited to those areas within the disturbance footprint 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. 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: No suitable habitat is present in the project area for listed wildlife species. Low-quality habitat typical of the area would be disturbed. No state or federally-listed wildlife species are mapped within the project area.

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



Explanation: Several streams are located in the vicinity of the project; however, these waterbodies would be avoided with the exception of one intermittent stream where existing culverts would be cleaned of excess sediment. Two roadside ditches would also be cleaned to remove accumulated sediment. Sediment would be removed when the stream and ditches are dry or flows would be bypassed to avoid downstream turbidity. These impacts were approved by the Army Corps of Engineers on July 19, 2019, under nationwide permit 14 (NWS-2018-707). No fish occur these streams. No floodplains would be impacted.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Permanent impacts up to 0.095 acre of wetland were approved by the Army Corps of Engineers on July 19, 2019, under nationwide permit 14 (NWS-2018-707). Impacts would occur from placement of fill for access road maintenance and cross-drain culvert installation. All work would be consistent with the approved Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of groundwater proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would not exceed existing road fill.

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



Explanation: All proposed road improvements would occur within the footprints of the existing roads or transmission line and are consistent with existing land use; no specially-designated areas are located within the project area.

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.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected for a short duration due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary noise is expected for a short duration from road improvement activities during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions are known. No changes to electric and magnetic fields would result from the project.

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project is located within privately-owned tax lots. Property owners would be notified prior to construction.

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

Signed: /s/ Kevin George

Kevin GeorgeEPI-4

Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: October 4, 2019