

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Thurston-McKenzie Access Road Improvements

**PP&A No.:** 4439

**Project Manager:** Donna Martin - TELF/TPP-3

**Location:** Lane County, OR

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to improve or reconstruct portions of existing access roads to structures along the Thurston-McKenzie Transmission Line No. 1 between Structures 1/11 to 6/4 in Lane County, Oregon. The majority of the proposed work would occur within the existing road prisms and would be confined to a depth of 0-50 cm below ground surface, equal to the depth of the deepest road ruts to be graded.

BPA is proposing to improve and repair approximately 3 miles of access roads along the Thurston-McKenzie No.1 Transmission Line. Approximately 300 feet of new road construction is proposed from the existing access road to Structure 5/2. Proposed road work would include; blading, shaping, brushing, and placing surface rock on new and existing road prisms. Common drainage features include 43 rock water bars, 8 drain dips, 2 cross drain culverts, and 4 custom crossings. Common road items include 7 wire, 1 ranch, and 8 chain gates. Construction of 1 turn-around and 27 landings also would be needed. The equipment to be used during the course of this project includes graders, rollers, bull-dozers, brush hogs, 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, 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/ Jonah Reenders*  
Jonah Reenders  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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

Date: June 9, 2020

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:** Thurston-McKenzie Access Road Improvements

## Project Site Description

The proposed project would be conducted along the Thurston-McKenzie No. 1 transmission line. The line traverses primarily rural residential/agricultural land just north of the town of Springfield, OR and is located in the BPA Eugene district. The work would be performed within BPA easement on privately-owned land.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> In a response letter dated May 28, the Oregon SHPO responded that they “have reviewed the report and concur that a good faith effort has been implemented and the project will likely have no effect on any significant archaeological objects or sites. Based on the information provided, additional archaeological research is not anticipated for this project.”</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The majority of the work would occur in the existing road prism, where a road-base of rock already exists. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be stabilized.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No known Federal/state special-status species are present in the project area. Vegetation removal would be limited to the area directly affected by the project. Any disturbed areas would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. No special-status species are present.</p>		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No in-water work is proposed for this project. Federal/state special-status species fish are not known to inhabit the project area. BMPs would be installed to minimize erosion impacts to nearby waterways..</p>		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands in or adjacent to the project area. The project would have no impact to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. Any spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

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



Explanation: The project locations are within existing transmission line rights-of-way and would not change existing land uses.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The proposed improvements are consistent with the surroundings and would not significantly change the existing visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project has a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to 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. 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, if necessary: 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, if necessary: 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, if necessary: 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, if necessary: N/A

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

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

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

Signed: /s/ Jonah Reenders  
Jonah Reenders, EPI-4  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: June 9, 2020