

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Kessi Consulting Sewer Line Installation on Ross-Lexington No. 1 Transmission Line Right-of-Way

**Project No.:** LURR-20220037

**Project Manager:** Charlene Belt, TERR-TPP-2

**Location:** Clark County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Kessi Consulting to install a new underground sewer line on BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW) between structures 7/3 and 8/2 on the Ross-Lexington No. 1 transmission line in Ridgefield, Clark County, Washington. The proposed action is part of a larger project to tie in the new Mt. View Ridge subdivision to public sewer systems.

On BPA property, Kessi Consulting would install a new 4- to 6-inch diameter high density polyethylene (HDPE) or polyvinyl chloride (PVC) sewer line parallel to the east of Ross-Lexington No. 1. Approximately 0.6 miles of sewer line would be installed within a single 3-foot wide trench excavated to a minimum depth of 4 feet. Temporary vegetation and ground disturbance would occur within a 12-foot wide clearing limit for the length of the sewer line (total approximately 38,000 square feet or 1 acre). The proposed action would require the use of an excavator and backhoe and up to five temporary 40-foot by 60-foot staging areas (total approximately 12,000 square feet or 0.3 acres). Following installation of the line, all disturbed areas would be restored to existing conditions and revegetated with regionally appropriate native species. No road construction would occur within the ROW, and no above-ground structures would be installed.

**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/ Walker Stinnette  
Walker Stinnette  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel 09/01/2023  
Sarah T. Biegel      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.

**Proposed Action:** Kessi Consulting Sewer Line Installation on Ross-Lexington No. 1 Transmission Line Right-of-Way

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned transmission line ROW between structures 7/3 and 8/2 on the Ross-Lexington No. 1 transmission line in Ridgefield, Clark County, Washington (Township 03 North, Range 01 East, Section 12). The ROW is dominated by common low-growing grasses, forbs, and weeds, including meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), tall fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*), and soft rush (*Juncus effusus*). The project site is underlain by the upland Gee silt loam soil series and by the Cove silty clay loam soil series, which is hydric. A forested, emergent wetland that is typically only saturated, but occasionally flooded or inundated, would be temporarily impacted by the proposed action. The wetland is rated a Category III under the Washington State Wetland Rating System for Western Washington, which suggests it has a moderate level of functions and generally has been disturbed, is less diverse, and is more isolated from other natural resources in the landscape. No perennial surface waters are present within the project site. Some minor livestock grazing and routine vegetation maintenance occurs within the ROW. Surrounding land uses consist of low-density residential properties and isolated stands of secondary growth forest.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA conducted a desktop review and intensive pedestrian and subsurface field surveys of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The Ross-Lexington No. 1 transmission line is located within the APE and has been determined minimally eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, the proposed undertaking would not alter the integrity or eligibility of the transmission line. No other historic or cultural resources were identified within the APE. Therefore, on May 4, 2023, BPA simultaneously determined that the proposed undertaking would result in no adverse effect to historic properties (BPA CR Project No.: WA 2022 025; DAHP Log No.: 2023-05-02940) and initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties:

- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)

On May 4, 2023, DAHP concurred with BPA's determination. No other comments were received.

## 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause approximately 50,000 square feet (1.2 acres) of temporary soil disturbance from excavation of the sewer line trench, materials and equipment staging, and soil compaction and rutting due to vehicle and equipment use. Excavated soils would be temporarily stored onsite, backfilled, and returned to original contours. Temporarily disturbed soils would stabilize as vegetation is reestablished and would eventually return to pre-existing conditions following completion of the proposed action. Standard construction best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to minimize soil erosion, sedimentation, and fugitive dust. The proposed action would not impact geology.

Notes:

- Reseed disturbed areas during the appropriate time period for germination with a native, regionally-appropriate seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would crush, strip, or bury approximately 50,000 square feet (1.2 acres) of low-growing common grasses, forbs, and weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native, regionally-appropriate seed mix and would eventually return to pre-existing conditions following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and the proposed action would not permanently impact any special-status plant species habitat.

Notes:

- Reseed disturbed areas during the appropriate time period for germination with a native, regionally-appropriate seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior and wildlife displacement could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, there would be no permanent impacts to wildlife habitat, and temporarily disturbed or displaced wildlife would likely reoccupy the site following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish habitat is located within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies or floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitat.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Kessi Consulting identified an emergent, forested Category III wetland that spans the ROW from southeast to northwest. Installation of the sewer line would cause approximately 1,700 square feet (0.05 acres) of temporary wetland impacts and 3,750 square feet (0.1 acres) of temporary wetland buffer impacts. Kessi Consulting is in the process of preparing a mitigation plan and acquiring all applicable local, state, and Federal wetland permits, and would be responsible for implementing standard construction BMPs as well as any conditions specifically outlined in permit documentation to minimize and/or mitigate wetlands impacts. The proposed action would not permanently impact wetlands.

Notes:

- Provide BPA with all applicable local, state, and Federal permit documentation prior to mobilizing to the site for construction.
- Comply with all terms and conditions set forth in local, state, and Federal permit documents.
- Reseed disturbed areas during the appropriate time period for germination with a native, regionally-appropriate seed mix.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation would reach depths to groundwater given the presence of wetlands within the project site. However, the proposed action would not generate or use hazardous materials that would contaminate groundwater or aquifers. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be consistent with the existing transmission line ROW land use and would not impact surrounding agricultural, industrial, and commercial land uses. The project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of equipment and general construction activities, including excavation and vegetation disturbance, would cause temporary visual impacts. No new aboveground structures or equipment would be installed, and temporarily disturbed areas would be returned to original conditions. There would be no permanent change in visual quality.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would produce minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from the use of vehicles, heavy equipment, and power tools during construction, which could be audible from nearby residential properties. Noise impacts would be temporary and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no permanent change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. Therefore, no impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of the proposed action.

### **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 proposed work would occur on BPA fee-owned property. No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ Walker Stinnette

Walker Stinnette

Environmental Protection Specialist

09/01/2023

Date