

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Grand Coulee - Foster Creek - 1 Impairment Project

PP&A No.: 4975

Project Manager: Elijah Sullivan, TELP-TPP-3

Location: Douglas County, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to correct five impairments on the Grand Coulee - Foster Creek - 1 transmission line. An impairment is an area where the distance from the conductor to the ground surface is inadequate, per National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards, resulting in a threat to line reliability and posing a risk to public health and safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure the line meets current NESC and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) standards.

The impairments on the Grand Coulee - Foster Creek - 1 transmission line are located along the spans 21/5-21/6, 22/5-22/6, 23/3-23/4, 26/3-26/4, and 29/7-29/8. BPA proposes to excavate the ground of the established right-of-way to achieve the required clearance for the overhead lines. Excavated material would be used as fill and spread evenly along low-lying portions of the right-of-way, stabilized and seeded, or hauled off site for disposal. Additionally, no structures or access roads are being worked on as part of this project.

21/5-21/6 has been determined to be farmed in the future; therefore, this section would require a minimum 3:1 catch slope, over excavation and stockpiling of the top six inches of topsoil, to be placed back once excavated.

- Cut boundary area would be about 0.1 acre (about 5,000 square feet; volume about 240 cubic yards).

22/5-22/6 is not farmed; therefore, cut material may be hauled off for disposal or used on site as fill. There are some large rocks/boulders in this section that would require jackhammering.

- Cut boundary area would be about 0.03 acre (about 1,470 square feet; volume about 40 cubic yards).

23/3-23/4 is not farmed; therefore, cut material may be hauled off for disposal or used on site as fill.

- Cut boundary area would be about 0.07 acre (about 3,000 square feet; volume about 125 cubic yards).

26/3-26/4 is not farmed; therefore, cut material may be hauled off for disposal or used on site as fill.

- Cut boundary area would be about 0.03 acre (about 1,360 square feet; volume about 60 cubic yards).

29/7-29/8 is within a farmed field; therefore, this section would require a minimum 3:1 catch slope, over excavation and stockpiling of the top six inches of topsoil, to be placed back once excavated. Less than 100 cubic yards of excess material may be generated from this area and hauled off site for disposal.

- Cut boundary area would be about 0.08 acre (about 3,360 square feet; volume about 55 cubic yards)

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/ Anthony Gibson

Anthony Gibson

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer Date: January 2, 2024

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: Grand Coulee - Foster Creek - 1 Impairment Project

Project Site Description

The impairments are located in Douglas County, Washington, in the BPA Wenatchee District. The project activities would be conducted within the existing right-of-way on private agricultural land. See Table 1 below for project location and impairment details.

Table 1. Grand Coulee – Foster Creek No. 1 Impairment Locations

Span(s)	Impairment	Work Required	Township, Range, Section
21/5 – 21/6	At Line Rating Clearances: -0.03' @ 0-0-50 to Ground	Excavation	T29N, R27E, SEC22
22/5 – 22/6	At Line Rating Clearances: -0.09' @ 0-0-50 to Ground	Excavation	T29N, R27E, SEC21
23/3 – 23/4	At Line Rating Clearances: -0.36' @ 0-0-50 to Ground	Excavation	T29N, R27E, SEC21 T29N, R27E, SEC20
26/3 – 26/4	At Line Rating Clearances: -0.77' @ 0-0-50 to Ground	Excavation	T29N, R26E, SEC25
29/7 – 29/8	At Line Rating Clearances: -0.12' @ 0-0-50 to Ground	Excavation	T29N, R26E, SEC29

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On August 21, 2018, BPA initiated section 106 consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). On August 22, 2018, Washington DAHP concurred with APE. On August 24, 2018, CCT concurred with the APE. On May 2021 a field survey was conducted and Site 45DO001473 was identified. On July 10, 2023, BPA submitted inventory reports and made determination of effects, per §36 CFR 800.5(b), the implementation of the proposed project would result in no adverse effect on historic properties. Washington DAHP concurred with the determination of no adverse effect on July 13, 2023. The 30-day consultation period ended on August 9, 2023; no additional comments were received from other consulting parties.

Notes:

- A 30-meter avoidance area for site 45D001473 has been identified. Where buffering is not possible, a BPA archaeologist would monitor project activities near sites.

- Cultural resource sites would be marked for avoidance or monitored as needed during construction activities.
- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal ground disturbance is anticipated for this project. The five impairments would be corrected by excavating soil in the existing right-of-way to achieve the required clearance for the overhead lines. Excavated soil would be used as fill and spread evenly along low-lying portions of the right-of-way, stabilized and seeded, or hauled off site for disposal. It is estimated that 300 cubic yards of material or less would be hauled off for disposal from around the areas identified as farmed fields.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. Vegetation may be crushed and removed in those locations where equipment would be accessing and fixing impairments. Any disturbed areas would be reseeded with a suitable seed mix to stabilize the area. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or other sensitive species are anticipated.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have minimal impacts to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to ESA-listed, state-listed, or other sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site is not located near any streams or waterways or FEMA-mapped floodplains. Appropriate stormwater BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding areas from runoff and erosion issues. Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are located within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during project activities. No excavation would occur below groundwater level.

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 existing land uses. There would not be any recreational or operational disruptions.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have limited impact to visual quality. Areas excavated to fix impairments along the existing right of way would be re-contoured to match the surrounding topography.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A minimal amount of vehicular emissions and dust may occur temporarily during this project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary noise from associated project activities would be expected. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

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: BPA Realty personnel would perform landowner notification 30-days prior to the project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed impairment correction activities would be addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Anthony Gibson Date: January 2, 2024
Anthony Gibson – EPI-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)