

# Categorical Exclusion Determination Adoption

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration Deck Sale

**Agency Preparing Categorical Exclusion Determination:** United States Forest Service (USFS)

**Pollution, Prevention & Abatement No.:** 4772

**Project Manager:** Chris Morse, TFBV-DOB-1

**Location:** Marion County, Oregon

**Description of the Proposed Action:** In coordination with the USFS, BPA proposes to skid previously-cut trees to decking locations and assemble decks in order to facilitate a USFS deck sale of trees to reduce fuel hazards on approximately 66 acres of USFS Willamette National Forest-managed lands. In February 2022, BPA felled approximately 1,150 fire-damaged trees from the 2020 Lionshead and Beachie Creek fires that were in danger of falling into BPA transmission lines along approximately two miles of the 230-kilovolt Jones Canyon-Santiam No. 1 and McNary-Santiam No. 1 double-circuit transmission line right-of-way (ROW) northwest of the USFS Detroit Ranger Station. The work was completed in accordance with BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Final Environmental Impact Statement, and Memorandum of Understanding with the USFS.

The USFS requested that the felled logs and the debris be removed from the ROW to reduce fuel loading. Both the USFS and BPA are proposing actions related to reducing the fuel loading in the ROW on USFS-managed lands. In cooperation with the USFS Detroit Ranger District and Willamette National Forest, BPA proposes to deck the previously cut trees and manage debris in order to reduce fuel hazards in the project area. The USFS proposes to conduct the deck sale.

BPA would use existing powerline access roads to access the project area. Once in the project area, vegetation would be cleared as needed along proposed skid paths, and trees would be skidded from their current location to one of approximately seven deck locations. Tree branches and woody debris not to be included in the deck sale would be either chipped and hauled off-site, or hauled to one of approximately four burn pile locations adjacent to the ROW. BPA would utilize conventional logging equipment to perform the work. Skid paths, deck locations, and burn pile locations were developed by USFS timber operations staff to utilize the topography and minimize impacts to soils and other resources. Deck and burn pile locations were chosen for proximity to existing roads and have been utilized for a previous fuels reduction project. Following the deck

sale, the site would be assessed and restoration activities would be performed in areas where soils and vegetation were disturbed. Project activities are expected to begin in fall 2022.

The USFS *Decision Memo Bonneville Power Administration Deck Sale* (Decision Memo) which constitutes its categorical exclusion determination was issued on September 7, 2022 (see Attachment 1). In that Decision Memo, the USFS found that the BPA and USFS skidding, decking, and deck sale, along with any necessary restoration activities would be consistent with the USFS categorical exclusion 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13): “Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.” The Decision Memo describes both the BPA and USFS actions in addition to relevant design criteria and compliance with other environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act. The design criteria developed for this project to avoid or reduce the environmental effects as identified in the Decision Memo would be implemented during project activities.

### **Categorical Exclusion Determination Adoption:**

#### ***Compliance with Department of Energy’s (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act regulations and DOE’s Guidance on Adopting Another Agency’s Categorical Exclusion Determination***

In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act 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 does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. Consistent with 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B (1-5), BPA’s action would not conflict with conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusions identified in Appendix B. Additionally, in accordance with DOE’s 2022 *Guidance on Adopting Another Agency’s Categorical Exclusion Determination*, BPA has determined that adoption of this categorical exclusion would not conflict with any relevant categorical exclusions or classes of actions listed in Appendices A-D of 10 CFR part 1021, and that this action is not covered under DOE’s existing categorical exclusions. In August 2021, BPA contacted the USFS and discussed DOE’s proposed adoption of the USFS categorical exclusion determination.

#### ***Compliance with Council on Environmental Quality’s NEPA regulations***

Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.3(d), BPA finds that the types of actions described in the proposed action are substantially the same as those analyzed in USFS’s Decision Memo because the proposed action is a cooperative action between BPA and USFS, and BPA’s proposed actions include the BPA actions discussed in the USFS Decision Memo. Consistent with 40 CFR 1506.3(a), BPA has reviewed and considered the information presented in USFS’ Decision Memo and has determined that it meets the standards for an adequate categorical exclusion determination under CEQ’s regulations.

#### ***Adoption***

Based on the foregoing, and consistent with 40 CFR 1506.3 of the Council on Environmental Quality’s regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, DOE’s National Environmental Policy Act regulations, and DOE’s 2022 *Guidance on Adopting Another Agency’s*

*Categorical Exclusion Determination*, BPA hereby adopts the attached categorical exclusion determination, which describes and analyzes BPA's proposed action.

/s/ Oden W. Jahn

Oden W. Jahn

Natural Resource Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

September 12, 2022

Date

**Attachment 1 Adopted Categorical Exclusion Determination**