

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Bell District Access Road Maintenance Project (2017 Design Year)

**PP&A No.:** 3682

**Project Manager:** Micah Bandurraga

**Location:** Kootenai County, ID and Pend Oreille County, WA.

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to repair 3.5 miles and construct approximately 0.25 mile of access roads along two transmission lines within BPA's Bell District, one in northern Idaho and one in northeastern Washington. The access road work would be for the following transmission lines: Lancaster – Noxon No. 1 and Boundary – Nelway No (see Table 1 for more detailed locations).

Access road maintenance and new road construction would include, but is not limited to, improving and constructing 28 drain dips, 6 water bars, 3 landings, a 40 x 50 ft. section of slope stabilization, one bridge, and 3 culverts within the District. In addition, proposed road maintenance and new road construction would also include; blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and spot and surface rock to ensure safe access to structures. General equipment used for this type of road work includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, brush hogs, excavators, and dump trucks.

BPA has easements for the roads. The underlying landowners crossed include the US Forest Service and private ownership.

**Table 1. Access Road Work Locations**

Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership	USGS Quad Name
Boundary – Nelway				
2/4	40N, 43E, Section 2, 3	Pend Oreille, WA	USFS	Boundary Dam
Lancaster – Noxon				
19/2-22/2	53N, 2W, Section 21, 22, 23, 28 & 29	Kootenai, ID	Private & USFS	Bayview

**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/ Laura Roberts*

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 4, 2018

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:** Bell District Access Road Maintenance Project (2017 Design Year)

### Project Site Description

The proposed access road work would be located on rural private and public forest land (Kootenai National Forest), foothills, valley bottom, and rangeland. Additionally, the project area includes the following four habitat types: Montane Forest, Intermountain Grassland, Riparian, and Agricultural.

### 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> Idaho and Washington SHPOs concurred (April 24, 2017 and February 27, 2017, respectively) with BPA's Letter of determination (April 4, 2017 and October 17, 2016, respectively) that no historic properties would be affected by the project. Corresponding letters were also sent to the Kootenai, Kalispell, and Coeur D'Alene Tribes with no additional responses received.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Material and equipment staging areas would be located on existing roads, structure landings, and turnarounds. Equipment would be restricted to existing road prisms, road fills, and structure landings except for the small section of new road required to support a new bridge across Lewellen Creek. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special status plants are present within the project area. Some clearing of Grand Fir, Doug Fir, Larch, Lodge pole Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Ninebark, Snowberry, and Mountain Maple would be necessary with the new access road construction at 19/2 on the Lancaster – Noxon No. 1 Line, and some minor riparian vegetation would be removed including approximately 10 alder trees during construction associated with the bridge across Lewellen Creek on the same line. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special status wildlife is present within the project area.</p>		

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



Explanation: There are no known federal/state special status species found within the project area. A new bridge is proposed over Lewellen Creek along the Lancaster – Noxon No. 1 line near structure 19/2. Resident rainbow trout do occur within the creek. There would be less than 1/10 acre of rip rap associated with the bridge abutments and therefore eliminating the need for Pre-Construction Notification with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the NWP 12.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Approximately 0.03 acres of palustrine wetland along the Lancaster - Noxon No. 1 would be impacted by a culvert replacement near structure 20/1. The impacts to wetlands would be authorized under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit #12.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. Project would not result in any ground water withdrawals nor provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

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



Explanation: No specially designated areas would be impacted by the project. A small amount of meadow and riparian land use would be converted to transportation. Meadow and riparian land use is common in the area and the small amount of removal would not significantly alter the overall land use of the area.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality as a result of the proposed road maintenance.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

### **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:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA Realty would make the necessary landowner notifications. Joe Holzinger, Special Use Program Coordinator with the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNFs) has been consulted with and a SF 299 application has been signed and approved. A team of IPNFs specialists have reviewed the projects and they have outlined their requests within the approved and signed SF 299 application.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: April 4, 2018