

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Taft-Bell Mile 38 Access Road Maintenance

**Project No. (if applicable):** 3982

**Project Manager:** Robert Zeller

**Location:** T50N R2E SEC 6, Shoshone County, Idaho

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to conduct access road maintenance in the 38th mile of the Taft-Bell No. 1 Transmission Line. The access road is approximately 6,800 liner feet long and a 400 foot section of it has become impassable due to the installation of Kelly humps by the Forest Service. The Forest Service installed the Kelly humps as they wanted to designate the road as a non-motorized 50-foot wide trail route. BPA met with Forest Service personnel in December 2017 to discuss BPA's access road easement rights. On January 18, 2018, BPA received formal notification from the Forest Service that the Kelly humps could be removed and routine access road maintenance could be performed on the access road.

The proposed access road maintenance will include the following:

- Removing Kelly humps that are impeding vehicle access to the transmission line structures in the 38 mile.
- Blading, shaping, compacting and rocking road segments as needed within the original road prism and 12-foot road width.
- Brushing or removing vegetation as needed, from within the existing 20 foot wide road easement.
- Installing a locked gate to limit unauthorized vehicle access while still promoting the Forest Service's desire to maintain the road as a non-motorized trail route.

The project will utilize erosion control devices (i.e. silt fencing, straw bales, etc.), as necessary, to minimize sedimentation of any downstream water resources during project activities. Any vegetative areas disturbed during access road improvement activities will be reseeded, as necessary, with a BPA/Forest Service approve seed mix to stabilize the disturbed areas. Work in streams will not be required for this project.

The proposed project will allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which will reduce outage times and maintain reliable power to the region. All work will be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

**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/ Michael A. Rosales

Michael A. Rosales  
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 5, 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.

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## Project Site Description

The project is located on commercial woodlot managed land and the Idaho Panhandle National Forest in a rural, non-developed area of Shoshone County, Idaho. The proposed road repair and improvement will be performed within the existing access road prism and 12 foot road width.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA has determined the undertaking does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties as the proposed work is located in an established road bed that has been regraded and maintained several times since the road easement has been in effect. Routine road maintenance (i.e. blading, grading, rocking and vegetation removal) will be limited to the existing road prism and 12 foot road width. No other road maintenance activities will be performed.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured and the WA DAHP, BPA archaeologist, and the environmental project lead will be notified.</li></ul>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Ground disturbance will be limited to the existing road prism and 12 foot road width.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMP's) will be implemented, as necessary, prior to any vegetation and ground disturbing activities.</li><li>Any vegetative areas disturbed during access road improvement activities will be reseeded, as necessary, with a BPA/Forest Service approve seed mix to stabilize the disturbed areas.</li></ul>		
<b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No suitable habitat is present within the project area for listed plant species. This project requires minimal vegetation clearing which will be conducted within and adjacent to the access road easement.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clean and inspect all construction vehicles and equipment prior to entering project site to prevent introduction of invasive weeds onsite.</li><li>Clean and inspect all construction vehicles and equipment prior to exiting project site to prevent spread of invasive weeds offsite.</li></ul>		

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

Explanation: No federal/state special-status species are present in the project area.

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

Explanation: No instream work will be performed. No effect to aquatic species and/or habitat.

Mitigation: Erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMP's) will be implemented, as necessary, prior to any vegetation and ground disturbing activities to protect any down stream water resources.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands were identified in the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No groundwater or aquifers will be affected by the proposed work.

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

Explanation: No change in land use.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Visual quality will not be affected.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amount of dust from vehicles will be temporary thus existing air quality will not be affected.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction noise will be intermittent, temporary and localized. There are no residences or other sensitive noise receptors in the immediate vicinity.

Mitigation: Access road maintenance activity will be limited to daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: Project activities will not affect 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:

- 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 has notified the landowners of the upcoming road maintenance project. The landowners have no issues with the proposed work.

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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/ Michael A. Rosales  
Michael A Rosales EPR-Bell-1

Date: June 5, 2018