

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY18 Monroe-Custer Mile 6-7 Access Road Improvement Project

Project No.: 2748

Project Manager: Richard Ross

Location: Snohomish County, Washington

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	Ownership/Land Use
Monroe-Custer No. 1	6/5 to 7/2	28N	6E	11, 13, 14	Private/Fee-Owned (BPA)

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) plans to perform routine maintenance along the access roads and structure spur roads of the Monroe-Custer No. 1 transmission line, between structures 6/5 and 7/2 in Snohomish County, Washington.

Access-road work would include: adding six cross-drain culverts, adding four ditch reliefs, five drain dips, 1,700 feet of rock-lined trapezoidal ditch, 375 feet of V ditch; performing minor blading, shaping, grading and adding rock (improvements) to approximately 3,200 feet of existing serviceable access and structure spur roads and reconstructing approximately 2,075 feet of road. General equipment used for this type of project includes graders, rollers, excavators, and dump trucks.

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/ Chad Browning

Chad Browning

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *June 8, 2018*

Attachment: 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

Proposed maintenance activities are located in a segment of access road for the Monroe-Custer No. 1 transmission line, between structures 6/5, and 7/2, near Snohomish and Monroe, WA. Elevation (above mean sea level) within the project area ranges from approximately 400 to 590 feet. Vegetation in the project area primarily consists of grasses and shrubs. Three palustrine emergent wetlands were delineated within the project footprint. French Creek flows under an access road where minor grading and rock placement is proposed; however, no in-water work will occur.

Within the project area is privately owned land and fee-owned BPA land. Land use within the project area consists of utility line corridor right-of-way (ROW) and includes dirt and gravel access roads, steel lattice transmission towers, and associated electrical lines. Adjacent land use primarily consists of rural forested land with low density residential development and agriculture. Portions of the transmission ROW have a high density of off-highway vehicle (OHV) paths. Adjacent land use primarily consists of agriculture, low density residential development, and natural open land.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area was surveyed by Historical Research Associates, Inc., on March 1, 2017 and reviewed by Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). No cultural resources were identified during the survey. DAHP concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on July 5, 2017.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, BPA would stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; DAHP; and the appropriate local, state, and Federal agencies. BPA would implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering and take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Access-road construction would disturb approximately 5,275 linear feet at a width of 16 feet. In addition, landing construction would disturb 3,100 square feet. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.</p>		

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation: Vegetation removal would be limited to those areas within the immediate road bed and landing sites. No Federal or state special-status species are recorded in the project area. Any disturbed areas outside the road bed would be restored post-project with native seed. Vehicles and equipment would be washed prior to entry into project area to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.

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



Explanation: No suitable habitat is present in the project area for listed wildlife species. Low-quality habitat typical of the area would be disturbed (approximately 2 acres).

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



Explanation: There is one mapped stream (French Creek) that flows under the access road proposed for improvement through an existing culvert. This creek contains mapped bull trout, steelhead, and Chinook salmon downstream of the proposed project; however, no in-water work is proposed. No critical habitat is mapped within ½ mile of the project. The project is expected to have no effect on the stream, its narrow floodplain, or fish.

Additionally, an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan would be prepared and adhered to during construction to ensure that localized soil disturbance does not cause sedimentation issues for any waterway. All disturbed areas would be restored post-project with native seed.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Permanent impacts up to 9,633 square feet to three distinct wetlands were approved by the Army Corps of Engineers on May 15, 2018 under Nationwide Permit 12. Impacts would occur from placement of fill material for access road construction. All work would be consistent with the approved JARPA and Bank Use Plan.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of groundwater proposed.

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



Explanation: No land use changes are proposed; no specially designated areas have been identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All improvements will be at ground level and limited to existing road prisms and the area immediately surrounding the transmission lines. Access roads would visually match existing roads.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar air quality impacts during project implementation are expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise from typical utility line equipment would be temporary and localized.

12. Human Health and Safety



Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. In fact, the proposed action 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Notification letters would be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to all landowners prior to work.

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

Signed: */s/ Chad Browning*

Chad Browning

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: *June 8, 2018*