

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Livestock Grazing on North Bonneville-Troutdale No. 1 and North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 Right-of-Way

**Project No.:** LURR-20190289

**Project Manager:** Charlene R. Belt, TERR-ROSS MHQA

**Location:** Clark County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow an applicant to create and maintain a pasture and to graze livestock on BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW) between structures 20/1 and 19/4 on the North Bonneville-Troutdale No. 1 and North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 transmission lines near Washougal, Clark County, Washington.

Fencing would be removed and replaced along NE Ammeter Road to the west and along the northern and southern edges of the ROW. The eastern fence line would be a new segment installed a minimum of 100 feet west of an unnamed tributary of the Washougal River. No vegetation removal or livestock grazing would be permitted within the 100-foot buffer. At least one gate would be installed along the northern fence to provide access to the landowner's adjacent property. Additional gates could be installed per BPA transmission line maintenance requirements. The fence would be constructed of posts driven into the ground and strung with barbed and/or electric wire. In areas where soils are too shallow, the fence posts would be anchored with concrete. Brush and vegetation would be cleared using a brush hog, and the ROW would be reseeded with a standard pasture seed mix to support livestock grazing. The site preparation would be completed using a tractor with separate attachments to install fencing and clear vegetation. Livestock would then be permitted to graze on the ROW.

**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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol Leiter

Carol P. Leiter  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange December 4, 2020

Katey C. Grange                      Date  
NEPA Compliance Officer

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:** Livestock Grazing on North Bonneville-Troutdale No. 1 and North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 Right-of-Way

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW) between structures 20/1 and 19/4 on the North Bonneville-Troutdale No 1 and North Bonneville-Ross No 1 transmission lines near Washougal, Clark County, Washington (Township 2 North, Range 4 East, Section 29). The project site is maintained free of tall trees and is dominated by a mix of low-growing native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species. Outside of the ROW, the surrounding area is a mix of rural residential properties and forested land. There are no wetlands mapped within the project site, and no wetlands were observed during a site visit in August 2019. Soil mapped within the project site is classified as Olympic stony clay loam, which is not hydric. The closest known wetland is located approximately 300 feet west of NE Ammeter Road. The closest surface water body is an unnamed tributary of the Washougal River, which runs north-south across the ROW approximately 500 feet east of NE Ammeter Road.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On May 19, 2020, BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties:

- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Office (DAHP)

BPA completed background research and an intensive pedestrian survey of the area of potential effect (APE). Eight cultural resource surveys have been previously conducted within one mile of the APE, and no historic properties have been recorded. The pedestrian survey similarly did not identify any archaeological or historical resources within the APE. The APE is in an area that has been designated low risk of containing any historic properties. Therefore, BPA has determined that the proposed undertaking would result in no effect to historic properties (BPA CR Project No.: WA-2019 204; DAHP Log No.: 2020-05-03445-BPA). DAHP concurred with BPA's determination on October 29, 2020. No other comments were received.

Notes: 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 in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

## 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground-disturbing activities would include fence installation, brush and vegetation removal, and livestock grazing. Minor soil compaction could occur due to vehicle and equipment use. Soils would eventually stabilize once the pasture seed mix becomes established.

Notes: To minimize erosion of exposed soils and sedimentation in the nearby tributary of the Washougal River, BPA would require the following measures:

- A minimum 100-foot vegetative buffer would be left undisturbed along the entire length of the tributary.
- Brush and vegetation removal would be carried out in the dry season (May 1 through September 30).
- Reseeding with a standard pasture seed mix would occur immediately following removal of existing vegetation.
- Exposed soils would be covered with straw until the pasture seed mix becomes established.
- Livestock would not be permitted on the property until the pasture seed mix becomes established.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The existing mix of native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species would be mowed and removed using a brush hog. The site would then be reseeded with a pasture seed mix to support livestock grazing. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) near the project site. No such species were observed during a site visit on October 2019. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA near the project site, and no such species are expected to occur at the project site. The project would not result in any adverse modification to suitable protected species habitat. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed project site would be located near a tributary of the Washougal River. BPA would require measures to minimize erosion and prevent runoff from entering the tributary, as described in the Geology and Soils section of this document. No activities are proposed within the tributary's floodplain, and there are no documented occurrences of any state special-status or ESA-listed fish or fish habitat near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on protected fish species.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are mapped within the project site, and no wetlands were observed during the site visit in October 2019. Soils mapped within the project site are not typically associated with wetlands. If present, wetlands that could be associated with the tributary of the Washougal River would not be impacted given the 100-foot vegetative buffer. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact wetlands.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would not reach depths that would impact groundwater or aquifers, if present.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Although the ROW is not currently managed for livestock grazing, there is an existing agricultural easement on the property. The proposed project is consistent with surrounding land uses. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not impact the visual quality of the area.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary and minor dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area from vehicle and equipment use during site preparations. Livestock would not be stocked in densities high enough to significantly impact air quality. Therefore, there would be little to no long-term impact to air quality following completion of the site preparations.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project-related noise (i.e., brush hogging and driving fence posts) would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Although livestock may intermittently create noise, it would be consistent with the current ambient noise typically associated with rural residential land use. Therefore, there would be little to no long-term noise impacts following completion of the site preparations.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not be expected to impact human health and 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: 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: All proposed activities would occur on BPA fee-owned property. No other landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette December 4, 2020  
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient CRGT