

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Driveway Paving

Project No.: LURR20190254

Project Manager: Charlene Belt – TERR-3

Location: Clark County, WA

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 adjacent landowner to pave a 550-foot section of existing gravel road located on the southern edge of the BPA fee-owned North Bonneville – Troutdale No. 1 transmission line right-of-way between structures 17/2 and 17/3, in Clark County, Washington. The width of the 2-track gravel road would be expanded by about 2 feet to a total width of 16 feet. Additional gravel would be placed on the existing 2-track road to create a uniform road base in preparation for paving, and to widen the road by 2 feet. Some excavation of soil and rock would occur to better define an existing drainage ditch along the 2-track road. Excess soil would be spread adjacent to the work area and reseeded. This road is used by the landowner to access his property.

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/ Nancy A. Wittpenn

Nancy A. Wittpenn
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 3, 2020

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 about 4 miles northeast of Washougal, Washington, in a rural residential area of east Clark County (1.7 miles west of the county line), near the intersection of NE 17th St. and NE 308th Ave (Section 26, Township 2 North, Range 4 East). The project site is along the southern edge of the existing North Bonneville - Troutdale No. 1 transmission line between structures 17/2 and 17/3. The existing gravel road is in relatively flat terrain. About 40 feet north of the road, the terrain generally slopes down to the northwest. At its closest point, the existing road is about 700 feet from Cougar Creek, a tributary of the Washougal River. No wetlands occur at the project site, but National Wetland Inventory wetlands are mapped along Cougar Creek. In this area, BPA's existing transmission corridor is surrounded by a dense, heavily vegetated, typical Pacific Northwest forested environment. Because the existing 2-track road is within the BPA right-of-way, low growing native and non-native vegetation and weeds predominate.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Consultation with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR), and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historical Preservation (DAHP) was initiated on August 28, 2019. That same day, DAHP concurred with the proposed area of potential effect (APE). No responses on the proposed APE were received from the Tribes. A pedestrian survey was completed on October 9, 2019. BPA cultural staff determined that no historic properties would be affected at the project site and notified the consulting parties of this determination on November 19, 2019. That same day, DAHP concurred with BPA's determination with a stipulation that an Inadvertent Discovery Plan be included with the final landowner agreement. No responses on BPA's determination were received from the Tribes.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Top soil would be buried by the additional gravel and pavement placed for the driveway. Soil is not expected to move off-site during the work as the site is relatively level. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would also be used as a precaution. No impacts to the underlying geology would occur.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project site contains a mix of native and non-native vegetation, including weeds. No special-status species or habitats are mapped at this site and none were observed during two site visits. Some native and non-native vegetation would be buried by the additional gravel and paving but the surrounding area contains the same mix of vegetation in abundance. No long-term impacts to vegetation is expected to occur.		

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



Explanation: The project site does not contain any mapped special-status wildlife species and no wildlife was observed during two site visits. The existing 2-track gravel road is located within the southern part of the existing cleared BPA right-of-way. Forested habitat parallels the road to the south and north of the existing right-of-way. While noise would occur from paving activities, potentially causing temporary displacement, no permanent impacts to wildlife that would be in surrounding habitat is expected to occur.

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



Explanation: The project site does not contain any water bodies, floodplains, or fish. Cougar Creek, home to federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish species and critical habitat is about 700 feet downslope to the northwest at its closest point to the project. Soil is not expected to move off-site during the work as the site is relatively level. BMPs would be used as a precaution.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Soil is not expected to move off-site into wetlands near Cougar Creek during the work as the site is relatively level. BMPs would be used as a precaution.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No subsurface work would occur and no impacts to groundwater or aquifers would occur.

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



Explanation: The proposed actions are consistent with the existing land use. There are no specially-designated areas on site.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Existing paved and unpaved roads criss-cross the project site and surrounding area for access to rural properties and towers along the existing transmission line corridor. Paving this section of access road would not be out of character with the surrounding area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would be generated during paving but these would be temporary and no long-term impacts to air quality would occur.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Paving noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

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: The BPA Realty Specialist is coordinating with the adjacent landowner and applicant.

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

Signed: /s/ Nancy A. Wittpenn
Nancy A. Wittpenn, ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: January 03, 2020