

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Jones Canyon-Santiam Transmission Line No. 1 Access Road Improvement Project

**PP&A No.:** 2652

**Project Manager:** Todd Wehner

**Location:** Wasco County, Oregon

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes access road improvements for the Jones Canyon-Santiam No. 1 transmission line to structures 81/2 to 82/1, located in Wasco County, Oregon. The proposed project would improve and repair approximately 3.5 miles of access roads, along with installation of six water bars, twenty-three drain dips, and three ranch gates. Proposed road work would include blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and placing surface rock on the existing road prisms. General equipment used for this type of work includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, brush hogs, excavators, and dump trucks.

Structures, 81/2 on the Jones Canyon-Santiam No. 1 Transmission Line and 129/2 on the McNary-Santiam No. 1 Transmission Line are isolated due to a wide, deep, and predominantly dry wash impeding access. In order to gain access to these structures while minimizing potential impacts to this washes, BPA would install a temporary bridge 16 feet (ft.) by 80 ft., spanning one of the washes, only when access is needed in the future for maintenance or in the case of an emergency. Temporary bridges of these types are stored at several field locations within BPAs service territory.

**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/ Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts  
Biological Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange  
Katey Grange  
NEPA Compliance Office

Date: March 27, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Jones Canyon-Santiam Transmission Line No. 1 Access Road Improvement Project

## Project Site Description

The proposed project area traverses both range land and land sparsely forested with ponderosa pine. The project area also spans two severely scoured ephemeral washes. There are not wetlands within the project work areas. See Table below, for Township, Range, Section Number, State, and Landowner information.

Township	Range	Section	State	Landowner
17S	11E	13	OR	Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
17S	12E	17,18,20	OR	Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p><b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> BPAs archeologist consulted with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs. A field survey of the proposed project area was conducted on March 5, 2020. The THPO concurred with BPA's archeologist, that no historic or archaeological resources were observed during survey, and that this survey and inventory effort results in a finding of <i>No Historic Properties Affected</i> for this Project On March 23rd, 2020</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>2. Geology and Soils</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal new ground disturbance is anticipated. Predominantly, ground disturbing activities would occur on existing access roads and subsequently rockered.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The following minimization measures would be implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During construction all appropriate Best Management Practices (BMP) would be used to implement site specific erosion and sediment control. All disturbed areas would be stabilized and seeded.</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. No impacts to state special-status species or habitats are anticipated. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed species.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize vegetation impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive on existing access roads</li> <li>• Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work</li> <li>• Stabilize and seed with a geographic and climate-appropriate seed mix approved by the landowner</li> <li>• Utilize erosion and sediment control materials composed of certified weed free materials</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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



Explanation: The project would have minimal impact to wildlife related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. No impacts to state special-status species or habitats are anticipated. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed species.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to minimize impacts to wildlife and their habitat.

- Drive on existing access roads
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work
- Stabilize and seed with a geographic and climate-appropriate seed mix approved by the landowner

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



Explanation: The adjacent ground surface of a dry wash would be minimal impacted from the installation and usage of the temporary bridge. No impacts within the dry wash are anticipated.

Note: The following minimization measures would be implemented to prevent sediment or contaminants from reaching any waterbodies.

- Erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sedimentation from reaching any nearby waterbody.
- Appropriately stocked spill response kits would be located on vehicles, other equipment, and storage yards used on this project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands would be impacted by the project

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No ground water or aquifers would be impacted by the project.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact existing land uses.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project would have minimal impacts to visual quality and the results would remain consistent with the existing surroundings of the transmission line corridor.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur temporarily during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise from construction activities 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:

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

Description: BPA realty, environmental, and cultural resource specialist have coordinated the proposed project activities with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts - EPI-4  
Biological Scientist

Date: March 27, 2020