

**Categorical Exclusion Determination**  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Big Eddy - Redmond No. 1 Access Road Maintenance and Urgent Ross – Malin Fiber Line Repair

**PP&A No.:** 4741

**Project Manager:** Glenn Vanbergen – TEPL-TPP-3

**Location:** Wasco County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B3.2 Aviation Activities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to repair a span of fiber cable on the Big Eddy – Redmond No. 1 transmission line from structure 22/2 to structure 26/1. The fiber line is known as the Ross – Malin Fiber Line. The project would reinstall damaged fiber and would require two new wood pole structures at 24/2A and 25/3A resulting in approximately 50 square feet of surface disturbance for each structure. The work would include the use of heavy transmission stringing equipment, bucket trucks, work trucks and trailers, and use of a drone to provide assistance in sock line installation. The proposed work is necessary to ensure power grid reliability.

Accessing the project work area to perform the repair would require improving approximately 14,450 linear feet (2.7 miles) and reconstructing about 550 linear feet of existing access roads. This would include grading and compacting existing road surface as well as hauling, placing, and shaping of additional crushed rock and replacing a cross drain culvert. Road maintenance would also include placement of water bars. General equipment used for this type of roadwork includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, and dump trucks. The access road improvements would preserve and repair the existing road, maintain roadway safety, and manage storm water run-off. Landings would require debris removal and leveling at structures 24/1 and 24/2 to allow for safe vehicle positioning.

**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/ Frederick Walasavage*  
Frederick Walasavage  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Katey Grange*                      Date: September 23, 2021  
Katey Grange  
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.

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### **Project Site Description**

The site is located on private land in rural Wasco County. Nearby land uses include rangeland and passive recreation. Vegetation within the right-of-way corridor is maintained as a low-growing plant community of mainly grasses and small shrubs. Topography is a mix of plateaus and canyons.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: This project has been reviewed by both a BPA Archaeologist and Historian on September 21, 2021. The APE was surveyed in its entirety in 2012-2013 by Historical Research Associates (HRA) for the Pacific Direct Current Intertie (PDCI) Project, and all construction for that project was monitored from HRA from 2014-2016. One archaeological resource was identified adjacent to the 2021 APE. BPA plans to monitor all construction within the 2021 APE as the area is a high potential area for cultural resources, and the previously identified archaeological site would be flagged off and avoided.

Additionally, the Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1 is a historic transmission line, energized between 1951-1952, and was renamed and combined into the modern line in 1957. The replacement of the fiber and addition of two wood pole structures has been determined to not affect the integrity of the transmission line. Therefore, BPA has determined that the project would result in No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties. Warm Springs Tribe agreed to have a monitor present for all ground-disturbing activities associated with this project. The Oregon SHPO has not responded. If project changes are required or new ground disturbing or restoration activities (including new staging areas, access road improvements or vegetation management), then further review under Sec 106 including consultation and field inventory may be necessary.

#### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during access road maintenance activities and wood pole structure installation. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary to prevent soils from migrating off site.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plants are present. Project activities would crush and disturb vegetation within work areas, but overall, the work would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species were identified within the project area. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited to the already impacted transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint or operational noise of the transmission line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected in the long term.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission system rights-of-way and access road and would be consistent with the existing viewshed.

#### **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

#### **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

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

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission system and to maintain power delivery 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: 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: BPA Realty notified private landowners. No concerns were expressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Frederick Walasavage      Date: September 23, 2021  
Frederick Walasavage  
Environmental Protection Specialist