

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Fiber Optic Cable Installation within the North Bonneville - Ross Transmission Line Corridor

**Project No.:** LURR20220154

**Project Manager:** Charlene 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 Henkels and McCoy, the applicant, to install about 610 feet of new underground fiber optic cable and buried cable marking tape in the rights-of-way for three BPA transmission lines: Ross - Vancouver Shipyard No. 1, North Bonneville - Ross No. 1, and North Bonneville - Ross No. 2. The fiber would be installed along the southerly side of NE Fourth Plain Boulevard and the westerly side of Falk Road in Vancouver, Washington. A hand hole access point would be installed at the location where the fiber optic cable path changes from east-west along NE Fourth Plain Boulevard to north-south along Falk Road. The hand hole would be about 38 inches long, 27 inches wide, and about 24 inches deep.

The fiber optic cable would be installed via directional boring, with entry and exit pits located outside of the BPA right-of-way. Directional boring would occur at up to 6 feet deep, and would be installed under concrete sidewalks and asphalt road surfaces. Trenching or excavation may be necessary in the concrete sidewalk at the hand hole location, and would be up to 2 feet wide and up to 6 feet deep. The excavated area would be backfilled with aggregate and trenching spoils. No vegetated areas in the BPA right-of-way would be disturbed by the proposed activities.

**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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

August 18, 2022

Date

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:** Fiber Optic Cable Installation within the North Bonneville - Ross Transmission Line Corridor

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located in the BPA right-of-way at the intersection of NE Fourth Plain Boulevard and Falk Road, Vancouver, Washington. The project site is located in WA T2N R1E DC43, and is surrounded by local businesses, suburban residences, urban parks, and schools. No wetlands or water bodies are located within the project area; however, a riverine wetland and the FEMA Q3 floodplain are located about 140 feet west of the project area. Burnt Bridge Creek and its associated riparian habitat are located about 320 feet west of the BPA right-of-way corridor and project area. Burnt Bridge Creek is designated critical habitat for Lower Columbia River coho and migratory habitat for steelhead.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

**Explanation:** The BPA historian and archaeologist reviewed the proposed action and determined that the undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present. The historian and archaeologist issued a memorandum documenting this determination on June 9, 2022.

**Notes:**

- The contractor shall carry with them onsite BPA's Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources Procedure document, and shall review the procedure prior to conducting work. Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop, and the EC lead should be notified immediately.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

**Explanation:** Ground-disturbing activities include directional boring and potential excavation at the hand hole site and would occur at depths up to 6 feet deep and in areas currently covered by concrete sidewalks and asphalt roadways. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to prevent the migration of any sediment off site.

**Notes:**

- Implement a BPA-approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would occur under concrete sidewalks and asphalt roadways, and would not impact vegetation in the BPA right-of-way. Furthermore, there are no special-status plant species or suitable habitat for special-status plant species present in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on special-status plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of special-status wildlife species or suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species present in the project area; therefore, the proposed project would not have an effect on special-status wildlife species or habitats. Generalist wildlife species that are habituated to frequent human activity and urban right-of-way corridor habitats would temporarily relocate to other areas while project activities are underway, and are expected to return shortly after work is completed.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish present within the project area; therefore, no water bodies, floodplains, or fish would be impacted within the project area. Burnt Bridge Creek's riparian corridor is located about 320 feet west of the project's boundary line, and the FEMA Q3 floodplain is located about 140 feet west of the project area's boundary line. BMPs would be implemented to ensure excavated soils would not impact aquatic resources located just beyond the project area's boundary line, such as Burnt Bridge Creek (designated critical habitat) or species that inhabit the creek (such as Lower Columbia River coho and steelhead).

Notes:

- Implement a BPA-approved ESCP that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.
- Implement a BPA-approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) during construction.
- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

### 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project area; therefore, no wetlands would be impacted by project activities. Burnt Bridge Creek's riverine wetland habitat, as identified by the National Wetland Inventory database, meanders northwest to southeast, just south of the right-of-way corridor and the project area's western boundary line. At its closest point, the wetland habitat is about 140 feet away from the project area. BMPs would be implemented to ensure excavated soils would not impact aquatic resources located beyond the project area's boundary line.

Notes:

- Implement a BPA-approved ESCP that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.
- Implement a BPA-approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) during construction.
- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project area is within the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 10 Troutdale Sole Source Aquifer System area. Ground disturbance is unlikely to reach depths to groundwater and no new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. BMPs would prevent impacts from unintended spills to groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

Notes:

- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pedestrians using sidewalks and vehicles using the roads may be temporarily impacted by delays or detours to maintain safe distances from project work areas during construction. However, the installation of telecommunications equipment and fiber optic cable would not change the land use at this site, and no specially-designated areas are located within the project area.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not impact the visual quality of the area because the installation of the fiber optic cable would be underground and the above-ground conditions would remain intact after project completion. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact visual quality of the area.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. BMPs, such as turning off vehicles when not in use, would be implemented to limit the amount of emissions released in the local area.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. However, noise impacts would be temporary (about 10 business days) and intermittent and would only occur during typical working hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in

ambient noise following completion of the project, as the new fiber optic cable would not produce any operational noise once installed at the site.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The applicant would implement a City of Vancouver-approved Traffic Control Plan to help secure the work area and keep the public safe during construction. Therefore, the proposed action 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: The applicant received permits from the City of Vancouver for the proposed work.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill August 18, 2022  
Becky Hill Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist