

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Storage Shed

Project No.: 1992-061-06

Project Manager: Elizabeth Santana – EWM-4

Location: Benewah County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.15 – Support Buildings

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA would fund the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to complete construction of a support building to store the equipment utilized to conduct ongoing wildlife mitigation activities under the Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation project. The Tribe would use hand tools and a man lift to complete construction of the storage building (with a building frame height of 16 feet on the low side, and a height of 26 feet at the entrance) on a recently built existing foundation with dimensions about 80 feet long and 40 feet wide. It would be built from wood and fabricated metals and would sit within a previously disturbed area next to an existing storage building.

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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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.¹

¹ BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

Jeff Maslow
Senior Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. 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 project area is within the boundaries of the Coeur d'Alene Reservation on a graveled parking area along Minaloosa Road and adjacent to an existing storage building (47°18'11.05" N, 116°50'20.86" W). The area surrounding Minaloosa Road is characterized by sagebrush steppe, mixed conifer woodlands, and agricultural fields. A nearby small creek runs about 25 feet from the existing storage building foundation, which meets Little Plummer Creek across Minaloosa Road about a quarter of a mile away.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no potential to affect historic and cultural resources because the storage building would be built in an already-disturbed parking area on an existing foundation and not involve any new ground disturbance.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the storage building would be built on an existing foundation, there would be no ground disturbance and therefore no impacts to geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the storage building would be built in an already-disturbed area and no ground disturbance or vegetation removal would occur, there would be no effect to plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the storage building would be built in an already-disturbed area and no ground disturbance or removal of vegetation that could constitute habitat would occur, there would be no effect on wildlife. In addition, noise that could affect local wildlife resulting from construction equipment would be temporary and low.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No activities would affect water bodies, floodplains, and fish because the project would not involve new ground disturbance or infrastructure resulting in soil erosion, changes in the local drainage pattern, or sediment deposits into the nearby creek.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect to wetlands because no wetlands are present.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the project would not involve ground disturbance or any activity that would have effects beneath the surface, there would be no impact on groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Land use would remain consistent with existing activities in the area because the storage building will not change the underlying character or intended use of the project site, which is currently dedicated to a similar storage facility and parking area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The storage building would be constructed in an already disturbed area adjacent to an existing storage building. Because the project would blend in with the existing storage building and the current land use on site, there would be a negligible impact to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A very low quantity of emissions would occur during the short period of construction, resulting primarily from vehicle exhaust and operating the man lift, and result in an overall negligible air-quality impact.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise associated with the use of the man lift and hand tools occurring during daylight hours during a short construction timeline. Because this noise would be temporary and limited to a short duration, and generally not loud enough to be disruptive to neighboring residents or passersby, there would be a negligible noise impact.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Standard construction safety protocols would be followed during construction. The construction activities would not cause additional congestion along Minaloosa Road. For these reasons, the project would not present a new risk to 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 project sponsor, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, owns the underlying land. Because the project would occur in a rural area with very few neighbors and result in negligible anticipated impacts, and would not introduce any new health or safety risk, landowners would be unlikely to notice the construction activities or experience impacts. For these reasons, no specific landowner notification, involvement, or coordination was deemed necessary.

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

Signed:

Jeff Maslow
Senior Environmental Protection Specialist