

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Rocky Reach – Maple Valley Rebuild Miles 99 to 103

Project No.: P06863

Project Manager: Ariel Kramer, TELF-TPP-3

Location: King County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance, B1.13 Pathways, short access roads, and rail lines

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes conducting access road improvements and repairs along the Rocky Reach – Maple Valley No. 1 line from line miles 99 to 103. The work would include the installation of multiple cross drain culverts, drain dips, ditch reliefs, switchback features, and a singular water bar over about 3.8 miles. Four landings are proposed with various dimensions with a maximum of size 60 feet by 40 feet. Specific landings and road sections would be rocked with subbase rock where necessary.

The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.102 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; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures* (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Wyatt Barrs
Wyatt Barrs
Physical Scientist (Environmental

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey C. Grange Date: January 26, 2026
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation

This evaluation 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: Rocky Reach – Maple Valley Rebuild Miles 99 to 103

Project Site Description

The project site is on the Maple Valley – Rocky Reach transmission line from structure 99/4 to 103/2. Located in the Northern Washington state plane zone. The project site crosses a variety of private, state, and BLM-managed lands. Topographically the project site sits between 1,900 feet and 2,100 feet in elevation and is bounded by the Grouse Ridge to the north, and the Snoqualmie River to the south. Wetlands are present within the project site; however, they only occur near the 99/4 structure. Three instances of crossings of streams with cutthroat trout occur in the area, and a small portion of the project is located within the Lower Middle Fork Snoqualmie River watershed as well. Overall, the project site area is used for recreation by the public, habitat for wildlife, and industry for the nearby quarry which has a presence between miles 102 and 103.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation:

On June 30, 2025, the BPA archaeologist and historian initiated National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation with the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Muckleshoot Tribe, the Nisqually Tribe, the Puyallup Tribe, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) ([SHPO Case #: 2025-08-05529]; [BPA Project WA 2025 115]). BPA determined that the project would have no historic properties affected. No consulting parties responded with additional comments during the 30-day consultation period.

Notes:

In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA will require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties. Please provide the project sponsor with a copy of BPA's Inadvertent Discovery Protocol.

Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbing work is planned within the project area and would be limited to the boundaries of the road prism. Most of the local geology in the project area is erosion resistant excluding brief portions consisting of sedimentary rocks. Erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent any sediment from traveling offsite as well.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special status species are present within the project area, and proposed work along access roads does not call for the disturbance of plants/vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary wildlife disturbance would occur from noise and human presence during. Construction would be limited to a few days in duration and no long-term habitat modification is anticipated.

An ESA species list was obtained from the Washington US Fish and Wildlife office dictating numerous wildlife species potentially within the general project area, but none with any critical habitats present. No additional state-listed/sensitive species occur within the project area, and the proposed work would have no impact on their populations. Marbled murrelet are the only species potentially present in the area; the nearest management zone occurs about 0.27 miles from the project area. Marbled murrelet populations would not be affected by noise from construction equipment and human activity, due to habitat distance from the project area preventing noise from traveling far enough to increase noise levels above normal background thresholds. Work within the project area would only occur on access roads and within landing areas which are not commonly directly inhabited by listed species, due to this, it has been determined that the proposed work would have no effect on wildlife.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work, riparian removal, or use of water is planned. Water bodies are present within the project area, though outside of the areas designated for work. Appropriate erosion control would be used to prevent sediment from travelling off site into any adjacent waterbodies.

Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No work or disturbance within wetlands planned. Appropriate erosion control would be used to prevent sediment from travelling off site into any adjacent wetlands.

Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation would not extend to groundwater depths, and no herbicide use is planned within the project area. Multiple groundwater wells are present within the vicinity of the project area; however, the shallowest depth occurs at about 110 feet below ground level, which would not be impacted in any way by proposed work.

Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would occur within and adjacent to an existing transmission line right-of-way and would be consistent with the existing land use at the site. The proposed action has the potential for temporary disruption of access road use to the public and relevant landowners during construction. Impacts would be due to the presence of construction vehicles entering, navigating, and exiting necessary access roads within the right-of-way, and are considered typical for the type of work that would be occurring. Signs and flagging would be used to designate areas where construction vehicles would be present. Vehicle presence and associated impacts would not persist past construction completion, and the project site is not located in a specially designated area.

Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in a perceptible change in the appearance of the project site. During construction, the presence of construction equipment and general construction activities, including vegetation disturbance, would cause temporary visual impacts. This visual change would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area. The project site is not located in a visually sensitive area.

Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in dust and emissions in the local area. Standard construction BMPs would suppress dust. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from vehicles, equipment, and general construction activities, which could intermittently exceed current ambient conditions. However, noise impacts would be temporary 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 proposed action.

Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout implementation of the proposed action to minimize risk to human health and safety. 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: All necessary landowners have been notified by Realty concerning proposed actions, and of any necessary involvement or coordination.

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

Signed: /s/ Wyatt Barrs Date: January 26, 2026

Wyatt Barrs
Environmental Protection Specialist