Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Holcomb-Naselle-1 Alder Creek Bridge Maintenance

Project No.: P06046

Project Manager: Ariel Kramer, TELF-TPP-3

Location: Pacific County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021; USFS NEPA procedures 36 CFR 220.6[e] as adopted July 23, 2024): B1.3 Routine Maintenance; 2.(e)(12) Harvest of live trees not to exceed 70 acres…

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to conduct maintenance on an access road bridge that crosses Alder Creek in Pacific County, WA. The bridge is used by BPA to access portions of the Holcomb-Naselle No. 1 transmission line for maintenance work. A bridge rating inspection was conducted in 2024, and the results indicate the bridge needs maintenance to extend its usable lifetime.

BPA proposes to stabilize the south and north banks of the bridge, and the south and north abutments of the bridge. Approximately 105 tons of riprap would be added to the southern abutment and bank, to an area of approximately 225 square feet. Approximately 45 tons of riprap would be added to the northern abutment and bank, to an area of approximately 100 square feet. BPA would use light and loose riprap, specified by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The riprap would be large angular stones comprised of granite, basalt, or limestone. The size of each stone would be approximately 4” to 24” in diameter. Riprap would be installed above and below the ordinary high-water mark into the creek channel. BPA would add preservative-free timber to widen the running boards on the bridge deck and replace the curbs of the bridge. BPA would replace the existing retaining timber logs with concrete ecology blocks.

Limbs from approximately 8 deciduous trees that hang over the bridge would be removed. BPA would conduct access road improvements to approximately 200 linear feet on both the northern and southern approaches to the bridge. The proposed road maintenance would be done within the existing road prism and include grading the approach to ensure proper road alignment. BPA would use existing road pullouts, located to the north of the proposed project, to store materials and equipment; the pullouts are approximately 100 feet long by 100 feet wide, and approximately 150 feet long x 50 feet wide. In total, ground disturbances would be approximately 0.6 acres.

Work would be conducted in the summer and fall of 2026. In water work would be conducted during the in-water work window for Pacific County, WA, July 15th through September 30th. The work area would be isolated by dewatering and monitoring for fish salvage would occur by a professional biologist. BPA proposes to conduct compensatory mitigation per requirements in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) programmatic biological opinion (PBO). Mitigation would include planting approximately 50 native riparian plants near the project site to increase the

native plant diversity in the area. Additionally, the work area would be seeded with an appropriate seed mix, mulched, and monitored to ensure the site remains stabilized and revegetated.

Equipment used for this proposed work includes graders, rollers, bull-dozers, excavators, backhoes, and dump trucks.

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/ *Nicholas Cisney*
Nicholas Cisney
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ *Sarah T. Biegel*
Sarah T. Biegel Date: *March 20, 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: Holcomb-Naselle-1 Bridge Maintenance

Project Site Description

The proposed work occurs in the Washington Coast Range in the Volcanics Level IV ecoregion, in Section 35, Township 12 North, Range 08 West, of the Willamette Principal Meridian. Weyerhaeuser owns the bridge and land surrounding the proposed work area. BPA has rights to use and maintain the bridge and the surrounding access roads. The surrounding area is forested timberland, managed by Weyerhaeuser, with some private rural residential properties in the area. The bridge provides access across Alder Creek, a small tributary of the Naselle River. The surrounding riverine and riparian ecosystem is vegetated with a mix of low-growing understory such as sword ferns and vine maple and mix of taller overstory such as cedar, alder, and Douglas-fir trees.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, the Quinault Indian Nation, the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (WA DAHP) on February 5, 2026. BPA shared that the Holcomb-Naselle Bonneville Road Spanning Alder Creek Bridge was recorded on Historic Property Inventory Form #738900, but that it is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The memo stated that BPA had determined the implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in **no historic properties affected.** On March 4, 2026, the WA DAHP concurred with BPA's delineation of the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and assigned WA DAHP # 2026-01-00296 to the consultation. The WA DAHP also concurred that Property ID# 738900, Holcomb-Naselle Bonneville Road Spanning Alder Creek Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and that no historic properties will be affected by the current proposed project. On March 4, 2026, the Chehalis Tribe's Historic Preservation Office concurred with the determination of No Historic Properties Affected.

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 (see attachment).
- Should there be a change to the project design that would expand the project footprint, please contact me to determine if further review is necessary under Section 106. Additional consultation and field inventory may be necessary to address certain design changes. If additional cultural work is necessary, then please factor the time and effort required to complete the assessment and determination of effects into your construction timeline.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbances would be minimal and for the most part stay within the existing road prism and previously disturbed areas. Heavy equipment would potentially enter a floodplain near the bridge to set a diversion pipe, if it cannot be done from the existing road. Wetland mats would be placed on vegetation prior to equipment entering the area. Temporary displacement and compaction of soil is expected as part of the proposed work. Sediment control BMPs would be installed prior to project implementation to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or runoff during construction. Compacted soil would be recontoured to match the existing flood plain. Following construction, any bare soils would be hand seeded and covered with mulch, or hand planted with native riparian species to facilitate soil recovery and stabilization of the project site.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA reviewed the project and potential effects to ESA-listed species in the project area. BPA obtained an official species list for the project area from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 12, 2026. No ESA-protected plant species are listed in the project area. There are no known special-status plant species present in the work area. Work would be conducted largely within the existing road prism. Inadvertent crushing along the road edge, and in the floodplain if access is needed, would remove only low numbers of plants there and thus have no effect on general populations. Wetland mats would be used within the floodplain if access through there is needed. Following construction, any bare soils would be hand seeded and covered with mulch, or hand planted with native riparian species to facilitate soil recovery and stabilization of the project site.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA obtained an official species list for the project area from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 12, 2026, to analyze the proposed project's impacts to species protected under the ESA. Marbled murrelet, yellow-billed cuckoo, monarch butterfly, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee are on the species list for the proposed project area. There is no designated critical habitat for the listed species in the proposed project area. BPA determined that the proposed project would have "No effect" on these listed species. Construction activity could temporarily displace wildlife from the work area, due to noise and visual disturbance from equipment operation and human activity. These disturbances would be temporary, and the surrounding landscape provides abundant habitat for cover. The project would remain largely within the existing road prism in areas where the ground has already been disturbed.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Proposed work in Alder Creek meets the threshold for preconstruction notification under Section 401 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Coverage under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 3 Maintenance and Washington Ecology's Section 401 Water Quality Certification would be obtained before work begins and conditions of the permit would be upheld during construction. Project activities may temporarily impact water quality, as the bridge maintenance activity would involve the installation of approximately 325 square feet of riprap armoring near bridge footings, above and below the ordinary high-

water mark. However, with the implementation of BMPs, including work area isolation, fish salvage, erosion and sediment controls, and conducting all work within the in-water work window, potential impacts on water quality would be minor.

BPA obtained an official species list for the project area from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which included bull trout. The proposed project area does not contain designated critical habitat for bull trout; therefore, BPA has determined the project will have no effect on this fish species. Alder Creek has anadromous runs of steelhead and coho salmon, and they are not ESA-listed stocks.

The proposed project is in Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Any effects to EFH are covered by BPA's programmatic biological opinion with NMFS: Endangered Species Act Section 7 Programmatic Conference and Biological Opinion and Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species to Administer Maintenance or Rebuild Projects for Transmission Line and Road Access Actions Authorized or Carried Out by the Bonneville Power Administration in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho (SLOPES PBO; WCR-2014-1600, September 22, 2016). It was determined that, by complying with the project design criteria listed within the SLOPES PBO, potential effects to EFH would be consistent with those evaluated and addressed in the SLOPES PBO.

Notes:

- Implement the permit terms of Section 401 Water Quality Permit and Section 404 CWA permits.
- All in-water work would occur during the established in-water work period for the waterways.
- Fish and aquatic life salvage and work area isolation measures would be completed prior to ground disturbance and in-water work in those locations with flowing water at the time of construction.
- Implement erosion and sediment control best management practices during construction and post-construction to stabilize disturbed soils near the waterways.
- Implement project design criteria requirements in the SLOPES PBO.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Wetlands are located adjacent to the proposed project area. No excavation within the wetland is being proposed. Proposed work would include adding riprap to the bridge foundations within the wetland. Additionally, equipment may need to temporarily enter the wetland to place a stream diversion pipe. In total, the project would permanently impact approximately 0.01 acre (325 square feet) of wetlands, with approximately 0.01 acre (500 square feet) of temporary impacts also proposed.

To comply with the Clean Water Act, BPA conducted a delineation of the wetlands in the proposed project area to determine jurisdictional status. BPA would obtain permits under Section 404 of the CWA as well as a Section 401 Water Quality Certification to authorize the proposed impacts to wetlands and waters of the United States and State of Washington. The project would be permitted under Section 404 Nationwide Permit 3, Maintenance. With the mitigation measures in place such as limiting the work area as much as possible and adherence to Clean Water Act permitting conditions, there would be a small impact to wetlands. Vegetation impacts would be minimal and any bare ground that is created would be covered with seed and straw. The area would be planted with native riparian vegetation and recovery of the area would be monitored.

Notes:

- Implement the permit terms of Section 401 Water Quality Permit and Section 404 CWA permits.
- Implement erosion and sediment control best-management practices during construction and post-construction to stabilize disturbed soils near the waterways.
- Use wetland mats if equipment needs to access the wetland.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated as the proposed project ground disturbance would not be deep enough to penetrate groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: There are no specially-designated areas within the project area and no changes to land use are proposed. The project location is within the existing transmission line access road. The project would temporarily restrict access across the bridge while maintenance is being conducted. Access across the bridge would be restored shortly thereafter.

Notes:

- Communicate with Weyerhaeuser when access across the bridge would be unavailable and when access is restored.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Short-term changes to visual quality would occur from construction activities and presence of vehicles and equipment but would return to pre-project conditions when the project is complete. Long-term visual changes include the addition of riprap for bank stabilization. In time, rocks would blend in with natural surroundings as they become covered with moss, sticks and other decaying vegetation present in the forest environment.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some dust and emissions from equipment would be generated due to construction activity. However, dust generation should be minimal due to the limited scope of ground disturbance. An increase in vehicle and equipment exhaust during active work would lead to a temporary and localized decrease in air quality that would dissipate quickly. There would be no long-term effects on other resources because of the discreet and temporary nature of the air quality decrease.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise consistent with road repairs and truck traffic would be generated. Large machinery would create localized elevated noise levels during the work, but because the project is in an unpopulated area and the work would progress at a relatively swift pace, low level effects would arise from the noise produced.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project implementation, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Therefore, implementation of the proposed action would not impact human health or safety. Overall, the project would improve the safety and reliability of the transmission system, and provide safer access to transmission structures during inspection, maintenance, and emergency response.

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 will send out notifications to nearby residents and landowners prior to the start of work.

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

Signed: /s/ *Nicholas Cisney* Date: *March 20, 2026*
Nicholas Cisney
Physical Scientist (Environmental)