

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: John Day-Grizzly 500kV No. 2 Impairment and Access Road Improvement Project

PP&A No.: 4845

Project Manager: Debbie Miller, TELC-TPP-3

Location: Sherman County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to correct one impairment on the John Day-Grizzly 500-kV No. 2 line and improve and reconstruct an access road to access the impairment. The impairment encroaches on the maximum allowed distance (MAD) between the John Day-Grizzly conductor and the ground surface. Correction of this impairment is necessary in order to bring the John Day-Grizzly No. 2 line into compliance.

The impairment would be corrected by excavation underneath the line. In locations being excavated, the soil would be placed near the removal area within the existing right-of-way, maintaining similar topography to the surrounding area. In total, the excavation area and volume would be about 0.04 acres in size and 33 cubic yards of material.

BPA is proposing to improve approximately 15,350 feet (2.9 miles) and reconstruct 8,750 feet (1.7 miles) of access road between miles 15 and 18 along the John Day-Grizzly No. 2 that need maintenance for access to the impairment. In addition, 20 rock water bars and 9 drain dips would be constructed for proper drainage and two gates would be installed. Road improvements could include the following activities: blading, shaping, grading, brushing, compacting, placing surface rock on to the existing road prisms, and installation and cleaning of drainage structures. General equipment used for these activities include bucket trucks with cranes, graders, rollers, bulldozers, excavators, and dump trucks. Geotextile fabric may be added as needed within the road prism for stabilization of road materials. This work is necessary to allow for proper and safe access to the impairment.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership
John Day-Grizzly No. 1	15/3-18/3	1S	16E	9, 16, 21, 22, 28	Sherman County, OR	State, Private

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 current *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures*, 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/ Julianna Martin

Julianna Martin
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 25, 2026

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

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.

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Project Site Description

The project area occurs in the Umatilla Plateau Ecoregion in an arid, grassland and sagebrush steppe dominated landscape. Land uses along the project include rangeland, agriculture, and rural residential. This project takes place in the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Management Area, managed by ODFW, and private land.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No resources were identified within the Project Area, BPA sent out a determination letter stating no historic properties affected on October 2, 2025. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) concurred on October 16, 2025, and Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred on October 24, 2025. No other responses were received.

Notes:

- If any Post-Review cultural resources are identified during construction, crews are required to stop work within 30 meters of the find and must call the cultural resources lead for appropriate next steps.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include excavation to remove the soil to address the impairment, access road improvement processes such as compaction and the installation of drainage features. Excavated soil to increase the line clearance would be placed adjacent to the removal area, maintaining similar topography to the surrounding area and stabilized.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Vegetation including grasses, forbs, and sagebrush would be crushed or excavated during project construction. In the long term, vegetation would be reestablished with seeding after project construction. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project area, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

Notes:

- BPA would perform seeding during the appropriate time for germination, with a climate-appropriate native seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise from equipment and human presence during construction. Noise disturbance would be of short duration and any wildlife disturbed would be expected to return to the area quickly after completion. The Lower Deschutes Wildlife Management Area includes potential occurrences of special species, bighorn sheep and grassland nesting songbird species, within the project area. In consultation with ODFW-biologist, BPA has affirmed the project would not adversely affect the species with adherence to the restrictions below. There are timing restrictions for special status species, as requested by ODFW.

Notes:

- BPA would avoid work from December 1st-March 31st to avoid disturbance to winter big game species.
- BPA would avoid vegetation removal and ground disturbing work from April 15th-July 31st to avoid disturbance during grassland songbird nesting season. Any work set to take place within the restricted time would require a certified biologist to assess for the presence of nesting songbirds.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are located within the project area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are located within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur below local groundwater level. No impacts to groundwater or aquifers

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: The Project is partially within the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Management Area. ODFW expressed no concern regarding land use changes due to the limited impact and duration

of work, as well as wildlife timing-restrictions, within the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Management Area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Areas that would be excavated would be re-contoured to match to the surrounding topography to minimize the long-term visual impact.

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. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

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. There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project work areas, and there would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work crews would follow appropriate safety precautions. Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

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 has notified state and private landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Julianna Martin

Julianna Martin

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: March 25, 2026