

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Jordan Valley Conservation Property Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Project No.: 2011-003-00; BPA-014690

Project Manager: Matthew Schwartz – EWM-4

Location: Linn County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde to purchase the Jordan Valley Conservation, which is a 336-acre parcel of land located five miles southeast from Stayton in Linn County, Oregon. BPA would hold a conservation easement to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat. BPA would also provide stewardship funds toward land management and maintenance of the property to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's commitments made in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration."

The property consists of upland prairie/oak savanna, oak woodland, wet prairie/wetlands, and mixed forest habitats, including Jordan Creek and its tributaries, which provides seasonal habitat for a mix of native plant and wildlife species, including but not limited to chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerine*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), and western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the 2026 Oregon State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). It is also within the Kingston Prairie-Scio Oak Pine Savanna Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) and is located within 2 miles from the Kingston Prairie Preserve BPA Tract ID WILMIT-WL-47) and Chankawan (BPA Tract ID WILMIT-WL-30) conservation properties.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde would develop a land management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property. The land management plan would be drafted within 18 months of closing. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

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 the 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.

Israel Duran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel
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.

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Project Site Description

The 336-acre Jordan Valley Conservation property is located in a residential area southeast of Stayton in Linn County, Oregon, on the western foothills of the Cascade Mountain Range, which is historically a transitional area from the open prairie habitat on the flats of Willamette Valley to the west, and closed canopy conifer forests in the Cascade Mountain Range to the east.

Currently, the property is used for residential, agricultural, and grazing purposes and developed with four structures on the south side of the Property that were constructed at various times in the 1900s, four structures in the middle of the Property that were developed in the early 2000s, and a 44-acre BPA Transmission Right of Way (ROW) runs north-south through the center of the property.

The northern half of the Property is dominated by south facing slopes with a strong dominance of Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*). The oak stands are densely dominated by a mix of young to moderate aged oak, with a small mix of a few larger oaks. Large, crowned oaks provide habitat for avian roosting and nesting sites, insects, and a diversity of epiphytic plants which further support including but not limited to chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerine*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), and western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) identified in the 2026 Oregon SWAP as Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and other important species such as acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), band-tailed pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*), purple martin (*Progne subis*), warbling vireo (*Vireo gilvus*), and western wood-pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*). The understory of the oaks comprises of dense snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*), and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*). The interspersed open areas are grass and dominated with very low shrub or forb composition. The southern half contains open flatlands along with Jordan Creek, its tributaries and numerous springs which are dominated by grasses (*Poaceae spp.*), sedges (*Carex spp.*), and rushes (*Juncus spp.*) with Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) lining the streamside banks of Feidler Creek. Jordan Creek itself is a tributary to Thomas Creek, a major winter steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) production stream. Small stands of low priority mixed forest habitats, that occur particularly in steep drainages, are comprised of Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Oregon white oak, and big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*).

It is also within the Kingston Prairie-Scio Oak Pine Savanna COA, a priority area for Oregon white oak and Willamette Ponderosa pine habitat restoration and protection. The property is also located within the Connector overlay of the Priority Wildlife Connectivity Areas. The Protected Property is also located within 2 miles from the Kingston Prairie Preserve (BPA Tract ID WILMIT-WL-47) and Chankawan (BPA Tract ID WILMIT-WL-30) conservation properties.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement and stewardship funding. To the extent that future activities on the property may have an effect, it is expected that the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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: Notification letters may be sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties at a minimum of 15 days before the closing date of the sale. Advertisements would also be posted in local newspapers, and information posted on BPA's public website prior to closing.

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

Signed:

Israel Duran, ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist