Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Hills Creek-Lookout Point Access Road Slide Repair Project

PP&A No.: 3082

Project Manager: Alla Kirsanova – TIPL-TPP-1

Location: Lane County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to perform repairs and improvements at four locations where slopes have failed and are currently preventing equipment access to transmission structures. BPA is proposing to utilize site-specific permanent anchored slope stabilization in these areas as described below. Slide debris would be removed and hauled to an off-site disposal location or disposed of within the right-of-way (ROW). Access roads would be restored to the original condition; however, drainage features, such as short ditches and drainage dips, may be added to improve drainage. The described activities are proposed for construction in late summer 2026. No in-water work would be conducted.

TRS	Work Locations	Proposed Remediation
20S02E35	Near structure 11/7 and associated access road.	Near structure 11/7: install a 5-foot-high by 20-foot-long concrete block wall with rip rap fill. On access road: clean debris and stabilize slope with permanent 18-foot-high by 30-foot-long anchored erosion control system.
20S02E27	Near structure 13/1 and associated access road.	Near structure 13/1: clean debris and remove partially failed material; stabilize slope with permanent 30-foot-high by 45-foot-long anchored erosion control system. On access road and landing adjacent to structure: construct a 5-foot-high by 65-foot-long concrete block toe-wall and reconstruct embankment above the wall with rip rap fill. Clean debris off access road below slide.
20S02E27	Near structure 13/2 and associated access road.	Near, and upslope of, structure 13/2: Construct a 5-foot-high by 55-foot-long concrete block wall at toe of slope and backfill above wall with rip rap fill. Remove and reset one guy anchor. On cut slope of access road leading to structure: Clean debris and remove partially failed material; stabilize slope with permanent 15-foot-high by 22-foot-long anchored erosion control system.

		On fill slope of access road leading to structure: construct a 5-foot-high by 25-foot-long concrete block toe wall with rip rap fill. Surface drainage improvements: e.g. ditching, waterbars, drain dips, etc. Add approximately 180 linear feet of surface rock.
20S02E17	Near structure 15/5 and associated access road.	Reconstruct the fill slope with rip rap.

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/ *Oden Jahn*
Oden Jahn
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ *Katey Grange*
Katey C. Grange Date: *May 7, 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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in undeveloped portions of Lane County, Oregon, from one to eight miles northwest of the town of Oakridge. Land ownership within the project area includes U.S Forest Service (USFS) property on the Willamette National Forest and privately held lands. Land use within the project vicinity is primarily forest land.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, BPA developed an Area of Potential Effects (APE) and initiated consultation on September 17, 2025, with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). BPA coordinated with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) due to the proximity of their lands to the repair area and the USACE agreed that BPA was the lead federal agency for Section 106 and concurred with BPA's determination. BPA determined the proposed undertaking would result in no adverse effects to historic properties. On October 18, 2025, the 30-day response period expired. No comments were received from consulting parties.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA's Post-Review Discovery Protocol document should be followed, which would 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

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All project areas are located in areas with a high risk of mass wasting. The project aims to mitigate these risks by constructing engineered slope/soil retention systems. Therefore, the proposed action would help prevent future sloughing and the loss of soil at these sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federally-listed plants or state special-status plant species of habitats that have been documented in the project area. The project would be limited to previously disturbed areas and is not expected to disturb vegetation outside of this area.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Northwestern pond turtle, a State Sensitive-Critical species, has been observed in the vicinity of the project area; however, the projects sites do not contain turtle habitat .. In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. Typically, this temporary disturbance would last less than 10 hours a day, during daylight hours, for approximately five consecutive days per site. Wildlife is anticipated to use adjacent habitat and return to the treatment area soon after the completion of work.

A species list was obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on May 7, 2025, for federally-listed, proposed, and candidate species potentially occurring within the project boundaries. Based on the ESA review conducted, BPA made a determination that the project has the potential to affect northern spotted owl, and would have no effect on grey wolf, North American wolverine, northwestern pond turtle, monarch butterfly, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, Kincaid's lupine, or northern spotted owl critical habitat. BPA also determined that the project would be consistent with scope of activities and action area evaluated in the USFWS' Biological Opinion (BiOp) and letter of concurrence (LOC) regarding Bonneville Power Administration Routine Inspections and Right-of-Way Maintenance in Western Oregon, Ecosphere Project Code 2023-0041665-S7, dated January 14, 2025, and the BPA Southern Washington Periodic Vegetation Management LOC, Project Code FWS/R1/2023-0081437, dated August 15, 2023. All terms and conditions and conservation measures identified in these consultations would be incorporated into contract documentation.

Notes: Construction activities at the sites associated with 11/7, 13/1, 13/2, and 15/5 would take place outside of the northern spotted owl critical breeding season from March 1 – July 15.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are located in upland areas away from waterbodies, floodplains, listed fish species, or their habitat, and are not expected to impact these types of resources.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are located in upland areas and are not expected to impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits. The project is not expected to result in changes or impacts to land use or specially designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Construction activities may temporarily generate dust if conditions are dry at the time of construction. Generated dust may temporarily diminish the visual quality of the area, but conditions would resume soon after construction.

Notes:

- A fugitive dust control plan would be developed and implemented if construction activities are expected to produce dust.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed project would utilize conventional equipment powered by petroleum fuels. Exhaust would temporarily impact air quality in the immediate vicinity while the equipment is in operation. Dust creation would be isolated to small areas and in short duration. Water would be used for dust suppression if needed. Baseline air quality conditions are expected to return shortly after project activities cease.

Notes:

- A fugitive dust control plan would be developed and implemented if construction activities are expected to produce dust.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project would produce localized noise associated with the use of construction equipment. During project activities, work would take place during daylight hours, for approximately 10 hours per day. The project would be relatively short in duration – approximately five days per site. The baseline operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The construction contractor would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing operation of the Hills Creek-Lookout Point Transmission Line. Project activities are not expected to impact human health or 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 traverses U.S. Forest Service property within the Willamette National Forest. The BPA Realty Specialist notified the USFS Willamette National Forest District Office in January 2026 regarding the proposed work. A USFS representative responded and requested the construction window of the proposed work, which BPA provided. No other USFS comments were received within the 120-day review period.

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

Signed: /s/ *Oden Jahn*

Oden Jahn Date: *May 7, 2026*

Physical Scientist (Environmental)