

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Hood River COOP Culvert 1/8 replacement project

PP&A No.: 7085

Project Manager: Donna Martin, TELF-TPP-3

Location: Hood River County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace a failing culvert in Power Canal Creek with a three-sided concrete bridge. The bridge would be 1.5 times the width of the existing channel. The project will also include re-shaping and rocking the crossing approaches on either side of the bridge within the existing road prism. The project would include in-water work and would be completed during the appropriate in water work window for the Deschutes Watershed District. The culvert maintenance activity is proposed for construction in August of 2026.

The proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. 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/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 19, 2026

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: Hood River COOP Culvert 1/8 replacement project

Project Site Description

The culvert replacement project would be at specific location in The Power Canal Creek along the BPA access road, Tract ID: B-D-24-AR-3 in Hood River County in BPA's The Dalles Maintenance District. All work would be done on an access road with current easement rights. The project is located within a private pear orchard designated as agricultural land. The site-specific location and details are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Structure replacements in The Dalles District.

| Transmission Line | Access Road | TRS | County/State | Land Management |
|--|-------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Access to the Hood River-The Dalles No.1 structure 1/8 | B-D-24-AR-3 | OR T2N R10E SEC1 | Hood River, OR | Private Agricultural |

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with a determination of no historic properties affected, with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon on May 28, 2025. OR SHPO concurred on July 29, 2025. No additional response was received within 30 days.

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. The BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager would be immediately notified. Reasonable measures would be taken to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would not impact the geology or soils of the project area. The proposed work is within small creek and the proposed excavation is not anticipated to go

more than a foot below the existing stream bed depth. Excavated material would be re-used onsite as fill for the project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor crushing or removal of existing vegetation could occur along the edges of the culvert replacement. Vegetation would be removed as near the limits of the bridge installation as possible. Vegetated material removed during the excavation would be set aside and used as fill and restoration material. Restoration of any disturbed areas would be restored at the completion of the replacement.

BPA obtained official species lists Under Section 7 of the ESA, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project areas on May 6, 2026. No ESA-listed plant species, federal special-status species, or state listed species are present in the project areas.

However, if any federal or state listed plant species are observed in the project area, project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-way and access roads and would not substantially alter existing plant communities

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA obtained an official species lists Under Section 7 of the ESA, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project areas on May 06, 2026 . Work would occur in the Power Canal creek crossing along a legal BPA access road. During project activities, work with heavy equipment may cause temporary disturbance to wildlife causing avoidance of the area. The disturbance would be of a short duration and would not affect any species' long-term activities.

The project location is not within or near any designated critical habitats or known occupied sites for listed species. Due to the lack suitable habitat and no known presence in the project area, BPA has determined that the project would have "no effect" on ESA-listed species or their critical habitat. No other special-status wildlife are known to occur in the area and would not be impacted by project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project includes working in the Power Canal creek to replace a failing culvert with a three-sided concrete bridge. BPA is obtaining a JPH permit from the Oregon DEQ which includes other consulting regulatory parties, for the proposed in water work. The project would be completed during the in-water work window for the Hood River sub basin, July 15th -August 31st. Dewatering and standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to stabilize the project sites during and after the maintenance activities. Site restoration with native seed will be completed post construction.

The project is within the general boundaries of the Lower Columbia DPSs for Steelhead. The project area in the Power canal system is located approx. 2,130 linear feet and several hundred vertical feet above the Hood River, the nearest system with Steelhead. Due to the vertical elevation change, Steelhead do not occur in the project location at any point in the species life cycle. The project will include dewatering and other erosion control mitigation measures during construction. For these reasons, it was determined that this project would have “No Effect” on the Lower Columbia Steel head DPS.

Furthermore, replacement of the failing and undersized culvert provides long term benefits to the water body and any species that utilize it. Replacing the undersized culvert with a larger three-sided concrete bridge provides unrestricted flow and improved species passage through the road crossing.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project includes working in the Power Canal creek to replace a failing culvert with a three sided concrete bridge. A wetland survey was conducted to determine the extent of the wetlands within the project boundaries. Wetlands were determined to be present at and around the Power Canal project location. BPA is obtaining a JPH permit from the Oregon DEQ which includes other consulting regulatory parties, for the proposed in water work and potential fill/removal of wetland soils. Based on the survey, the wetland disturbance will be negligible, and only to the extent necessary to install the larger three side bridge. Wetland soils will be set aside and for reuse as fill material where necessary. No left over wetland soil or other fill material will be placed within the wetland boundary. Site restoration with native seed will be completed post construction.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The proposed work is within small creek and not connected to ground water. The proposed excavation is not anticipated to go more than a foot below the existing stream bed depth. Dewatering and standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to stabilize the project sites during and after the maintenance activities.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project location is confined to the existing transmission line right-of-way access road leading to structure 1/8 of the Hood River-The Dalles transmission line. Surrounding land use is private Agriculture, located within a pear orchard. The project would not impact public land, including any recreational areas. The project work location would be localized to the existing culvert crossing area and would not significantly impact the underlying property.

The project site is not located within any Specially-Designated areas including the nearby Columbia River George National Scenic Area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions would not affect the visual quality of the small creek crossing and would not result in a noticeable visual change from the existing structure. Work is to replace an existing creek crossing culvert along an existing access road. Furthermore, the project is located on private land in a low draw that runs the length of the property. The project location is on private property and is not accessible or visible to the general public.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project work would be of a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be located away from any populated areas on private land. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is considered normal construction and maintenance. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery in the region.

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 notified and coordinated with the landowners in advance of the construction of the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Greg Tippetts Date: May 19, 2026
Greg Tippetts
Physical Scientist (Environmental)