

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: McNary-Horse Heaven No. 1 Impairment Remediation Project

PP&A No.: 6936

Project Manager: Debbie Miller – TELC-TPP-3

Location: Benton, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to correct 22 impairments on the McNary-Horse Heaven No. 1 230-kilovolt transmission line. The impairments exist where the conductor can expand and sag, during certain operating conditions, to where it is too close to the ground surface and can potentially create unsafe conditions or cause an outage. Correction of these impairments is necessary to safely operate the McNary-Horse Heaven No. 1 line at its rated capacity within the expected range of operating conditions.

The impairments would be corrected by excavation, using bull dozers, excavators, dump trucks, or other conventional equipment. Most excavated material would be hauled off for disposal; however, some sites may be suitable for on-site disposal. Exposed soils would be revegetated or restored to the landowner's specifications. Construction is proposed for late summer/early fall 2026.

In total, the excavation area and volume would be about 4.6 acres and 9,100 cubic yards of material, respectively; however, the actual volume is expected to increase once the soil and rock are excavated from the current environment and become less dense.

Span	Township	Range	Section	Area (Square Feet)	Cut Volume (Cubic Yards, In Situ)	Debris Disposal
3/5-3/6	5N	28E	5	16,010	1,133	Off-site
4/1-4/2	5N	28E	6	7,826	438	Off-site
4/2-4/3	5N	28E	6	9,860	400	Off-site
4/3-4/4	5N	28E	6	9,757	344	Off-site
4/4-5/1	5N	28E	6	13,072	662	Off-site
5/1-5/2	5N	28E	6	3,876	78	On-site or off-site
5/2-5/3	5N	27E	1	1,672	43	Off-site
6/4-7/1	5N	27E	2	13,206	513	Off-site

7/2-7/3	5N	27E	2,3	12,470	509	Off-site
7/4-7/5	5N	27E	3	10,698	223	Off-site
7/5-8/1	5N	27E	3	9,390	263	Off-site
9/1-9/2	5N	27E	4	16,731	599	Off-site
9/2-9/3	5N	27E	5	6,518	144	Off-site
9/5-10/1	5N	27E	5	16,192	745	Off-site
10/4-11/1	5N	27E	6	10,504	515	Off-site
11/1-11/2	5N	27E	6	5,991	145	Off-site
11/4-11/5	5N	26E	1	10,174	437	Off-site
12/2-12/3	5N	26E	1	712	25	Off-site
12/4-12/5	5N	26E	2	2,315	72	Off-site
13/2-13/3	5N	26E	3	12,164	1,557	On-site or off-site
16/5-16/6	5N	26E	6	6,060	152	Off-site
17/1-17/2	5N	26E	7	4,832	92	Off-site

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 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.

/s/ Oden Jahn

Oden Jahn

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 2, 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: McNary-Horse Heaven No. 1 Impairment Remediation Project

Project Site Description

The project area is set within the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion in an arid landscape, dominated by grassland and sagebrush steppe. All the impairments are located on private lands, in a transmission line corridor that includes two other BPA transmission lines. The impairments are in areas that are minimally developed, but nearby land uses include agricultural, industrial, rangeland, and rural residential. Elevations in the project area range from 325 to 464 feet above sea level.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) on August 25, 2025. BPA sent a determination of no historic properties affected on December 5, 2025, to the consulting parties. BPA received concurrence of its determination from DAHP on December 8, 2025, and SHPO. No other comments were received during the 30-day response period.

Notes: In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, work would be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Impairment remediation activities are expected to cause temporary soil disturbances that increase the chance of project-related erosion. Due to the overall footprint of the project, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be prepared prior to the start of construction. Site restoration would begin during, and immediately after, construction activities and would incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) from the Stormwater Management Manual for Eastern Washington (SWMMEW). Therefore, the proposed action would have limited temporary impacts on geology and soils.

Notes: This project would incorporate the following BMPs, and others as needed from the SWMMEW:

- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project as per BMP C101.
- Soils would be prepared for revegetation by contouring, if necessary, to blend with existing topography, and by surface-roughening by tracking and/or contour furrows as described in BMP C130.

- Vegetative cover/stabilization would be re-established by seeding and mulching as described in BMP C120: Temporary and Permanent Seeding; and C121: Mulching. An appropriate seed mix would be chosen based on site conditions and applied at the recommended rate and time, unless otherwise specified by landowner.
- Bonded fiber matrix (as discussed in BMP C120) or rolled erosion control products (as discussed in BMP C122: Nets and Blankets) would be utilized for slopes greater than 2.5H:1V (40 percent).
- Wattles, as discussed in BMP C235, would be used where needed to reduce the velocity and spread the flow of rill and sheet runoff.
- Dust control, as discussed in BMP C140, would be used to prevent wind transport of dust from disturbed soil surfaces onto roadways, into drainage systems, and into surface waters.
- Staging, fueling, materials storage sites would be at least 150 feet from any natural water body or wetland. All equipment fueling operations would utilize pumps, funnels, and absorbent pads. Engine, transmission, and hydraulic oil may be added as needed utilizing funnels and drip pans.
- If a fluid leak is discovered on a piece of construction equipment, drip pans and/or absorbent pads would be placed under the leak to prevent fluid contact with ground or soil surface. The piece of equipment would be removed from the project site within 24 hours and repairs performed prior to returning the equipment to the project.
- Spill containment and cleanup materials would be readily available in construction equipment, at staging areas, and at work sites. Any spill response materials used would be replaced within 24 hours.

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: The following conservation measures would be implemented during this project:

- Machines, vehicles, and other equipment would be cleaned prior to working within the project area.
- Weeds or other unwanted vegetation would not be spread.
- Vehicles and equipment would stay within authorized work areas.
- Soil disturbance beyond the footprint of authorized roads, landings, and pulling and tensioning sites would be minimized.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise from equipment and human presence during construction. Noise disturbance would be short duration and any wildlife disturbed would be expected to return to the area quickly after completion. Additionally, the project would take place outside of the general nesting season for birds that are expected to be present within the project area.

There are no Federal/state special-status species and habitats known to occur in the project area; therefore, the proposed action would not affect Federal/state special-status wildlife. Non-sensitive wildlife that may utilize the project area could be affected by construction noise, use of equipment, and human activity; however, these impacts would

be temporary, would only occur during daylight hours, and habitat would not be modified in a way that would preclude the future use of the project area.

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.

Notes: The BMPs described in the Geology and Soils section above would minimize the potential for the proposed project to impact waterbodies, floodplains, listed fish species, or their habitat.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

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

Notes: The BMPs described above would minimize the potential for the proposed project to impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

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

Notes: The BMPs described above would minimize the potential for the proposed project to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no specially-designated areas in the project area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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. Additionally, dust may be created by excavation activities and driving on unpaved access roads. Dust creation would be isolated to small areas and relatively short in duration. Water would be used for dust suppression if needed. Baseline air quality conditions are expected to return shortly after project activities cease.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project activities, use of vehicles and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. Work would take place during daylight hours, for approximately eight hours per day. The project would be relatively short in duration – not expected to last more than approximately a week in any one impairment location. The baseline operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

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, and continues to coordinate with, 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/ Oden Jahn

Date: July 2, 2026

Oden Jahn

Physical Scientist (Environmental)