

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Yakama Nation's Data Collection for Snyder Creek Restoration Project

Project No.: 1997-0596-00; LURR 20250344

Project Manager: Chad Baumler, EWL; Brent Leslie, TERR-THE DALLES

Location: Klickitat County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow the Yakama Nation (YN) to implement geotechnical studies for the Snyder Creek Restoration Project within BPA's fee-owned right-of-way (ROW). YN would excavate three trenches within the BPA right-of-way utilizing heavy equipment. Each trench would be up to 3 feet wide, 14 feet deep, and 40 feet long. Excavation of this material would be to evaluate the below surface substrate to inform the design process of the proposed Snyder Creek Restoration Project.

BPA authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

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.

Catherine Clark
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 proposed project site is located in a BPA ROW, in Klickitat County, Washington (T4N R13E Section 15). Project activities would be carried out within BPA fee-owned ROW on North Bonneville-Midway No. 1 and Knight-Ostrander No. 1 transmission lines. Surface cover within the project site is comprised of low-growing grasses and forbs and maintained gravel road surfaces. The area outside the right-of-way may be characterized as upland shrub steppe land that is publicly and privately owned. The nearest body of water is Snyder Creek, approximately 20 feet south of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On July 30, 2026, BPA completed a combined initiation and determination consultation for LURR20250344 (WA 2024 260) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) on the proposed project. Consulting parties for the proposed project included the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN) and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). BPA received concurrence on the determination from DAHP on July 30, 2026. No other responses were received in the 30-day period.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed geotechnical excavation would cause soil disturbance at a depth of approximately 14 feet. The excavated material for the trenches would be placed nearby on hard surfaces and would be returned to the pits after investigations are complete. Access to the geotechnical locations would be via existing roads or over mine tailings, with no new access roads or road modifications needed to complete the investigations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No endangered species act (ESA)-listed or state special-status plant species have been recorded in or near the project area, and no suitable habitat is present. The proposed activities would impact existing vegetation, such as ground disturbance by excavators and potential trampling by humans; however, no trees would be removed during proposed activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal behavior and wildlife displacement could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction activities. However, there would be no permanent impacts to wildlife habitat within BPA ROW, and temporarily

disturbed or displaced wildlife would likely reoccupy the site following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any ESA-listed or special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present according to best available data.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish present within the project area; therefore, no water bodies, floodplains, or fish would be impacted within the project area. Best management practices would be implemented to ensure excavated soils would not impact aquatic resources located beyond the project area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project area; therefore, no wetlands would be impacted within the project area. BMPs would be implemented to ensure excavated soils would not impact aquatic resources located beyond the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation would not reach depths that would intersect groundwater. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially-designated areas are located within the project area. No land use changes are proposed, nor would the proposed project activities change the current land use at this site.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During implementation, the presence of equipment and general construction activities would cause temporary visual impacts. The impacts would be minor overall, and YN would be required to return the BPA ROW to its pre-existing visual conditions following project completion.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor dust and vehicle emissions would occur due to construction activities, but these would be temporary and would return to normal conditions following construction completion.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would result in a minor, temporary increase in ambient noise due to human presence, and use of vehicles and equipment. Normal conditions would return upon project completion.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work is not considered hazardous, nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the general public. YN and their contractors would be responsible for and comply with all procedural and substantive environmental requirements imposed by local, state, or Federal laws and regulations applicable to the proposed project. There would be no soil contamination or hazardous conditions and no CERCLA sites.

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: Yakama Nation, its related entities, and its environmental contractors are responsible for coordinating with adjacent landowners, as appropriate.

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

Signed:

Catherine Clark
Environmental Protection Specialist