

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Alvey MHQ Retaining Wall

PP&A No.: 7163

Project Manager: Donald Jones – TFEV-ALVEY

Location: Lane County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance, B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: The proposed action involves the construction of an engineered eco-block retaining wall system, backfilling of the void space with clean fill dirt and rock to create a level working surface, and the installation of a safety railing. The action would be entirely within the boundaries of the Alvey Maintenance Headquarters site on previously disturbed land and would support transmission infrastructure projects.

Minor surface clearing including clearing of sparse weeds, volunteer vegetation, and loose surface soils along the distressed slope would be performed. No major deep excavation of undisturbed native soil would be required, and there are no existing structural footings to be removed. There would be pre-construction installation of sediment barriers (e.g., silt fences, wattles) to prevent sediment migration during construction.

The project would perform: Minor excavation and grading of the subgrade base along the alignment of the wall, including leveling and compacting the ground surface to establish a flat, stable, and level foundation specifically prepared to receive the first course of precast “eco-blocks.” Stacking and interlocking precast concrete eco-blocks would form a durable, gravity-retaining wall system along the prepared slope. Installation of a perforated drainage pipe wrapped in geotextile fabric behind the eco-block wall would collect water, relieve hydrostatic pressure, and direct runoff safely to existing stormwater systems. Backfilling the area behind the eco-block wall with clean, previously-disturbed fill dirt and structural rock. The backfill would be built up and mechanically compacted in lifts to create a level, stable operational surface.

Additionally, the project would include mounting a heavy-duty, industrial-grade safety railing along the top edge of the newly constructed eco-block retaining wall to ensure fall protection and operational safety for personnel and vehicles. Capping the backfilled area with a compacted layer of clean gravel/aggregate would establish a durable, permeable surface for outdoor transmission infrastructure equipment storage (i.e. insulators, transmission line cable, etc.) and utility vehicle parking.

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/ Steven Selser
Steven Selser
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel Date: September 15, 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.

Proposed Action: Alvey MHQ Retaining Wall

Project Site Description

The project would be located at the Alvey Maintenance Headquarters (MHQ) in Lane County, Oregon, behind the Facility Maintenance Worker's warehouse and vehicle storage structure. It is industrial land located on previously-disturbed ground that is covered with fill dirt and gravel.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA Cultural Resource Staff have determined that, pursuant to the *Nationwide Programmatic Agreement Among the Bonneville Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration, the Western Area Power Administration, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Routine Transmission Operations and Maintenance Undertakings Associated with Existing Transmission Facilities and Access Roads Throughout the United States*, the proposed Retaining Wall at Alvey Maintenance Headquarters would result in no historic properties affected as **Appendix G Conditions A.1 and A.8** are met.

Notes:

- A.1. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) has been surveyed, and no historic properties are within the APE or historic properties will be avoided within the APE.
- A.8. The APE or portions has/have been significantly disturbed and is unlikely to retain significant intact cultural deposits. Disturbance would include the horizontal and vertical extent of previously graded or bladed areas, locations of demonstrated direct impacts from previous construction including prior pole installation and replacements, extensive access road construction and maintenance, strip mining, trenching, heavy recreational use, or severe erosion, and areas that are washed out/undercut from erosion.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal ground disturbance would occur in the areas where ground leveling for eco-block installation would occur. The area would be backfilled with clean soil and gravel.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federally-listed or State special-status species or habitat is located at the project site. The work area has no native soil and no sensitive vegetation is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any Federal or State special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to inside the already impacted MHQ yard and would not substantially alter the footprint; therefore, any local wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are within or near the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project would adhere to appropriate best management practices to prevent impacts to groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially-designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Limited impacts to visual quality. The ground elevation would rise to be level with the existing road and would look like the surrounding area. The retaining wall would be behind a building, so would not be readily seen.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a small, temporary impact on air quality from vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not have an impact on human health or safety. The railing would be installed to protect workers' 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 property is owned and maintained by BPA.

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

Signed: /s/ Steven Selser Date: September 15, 2026
Steven D. Selser
Physical Scientist (Environmental)