

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** McNary-Ross Access Road Culvert Replacement

**PP&A No.:** 2229

**Project Manager:** Rick Ross, TELF-TPP-3

**Location:** Skamania County, WA

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to replace an existing culvert with a bridge on an access road near line mile 132 of the McNary-Ross transmission line No.1 that presents a barrier to fish passage. The culvert is located on a BPA easement access road within Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-owned and managed land (T3N, R8E, Section 16). The culvert currently presents a barrier to fish passage on Brush Creek and does not meet DNR fish passage standards that went into effect in 2015.

BPA would replace the culvert with a new fish-friendly bridge at the stream crossing. The new bridge is designed to meet the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) *Design of Road Culverts for Fish Passage* standards, as well as standards provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and was reviewed and approved by DNR engineers. Currently, the crossing is maintained by a 45 ft. long x 8 ft. diameter culvert. BPA is proposing to remove the culvert, and install an 18 ft. wide x 60 ft. long bridge in the former culvert location. The stream channel will be slightly realigned and graded to meet the current elevation and general stream alignment. The bed and bank of Brush Creek will be restored with native cobbles and boulders. The disturbed soils in the work area will be restored with a climate appropriate native seed mix and willow stakes as necessary. In-water work will be required to remove the existing culvert and excavate the fill material that currently surrounds the culvert. The work area will be isolated with a coffer dam and dewatered prior to in-water work commencing. Downstream flows will be maintained during the project. In addition, the work would include a slide repair and may also include road regrading, road construction, and/or road decommissioning. Work equipment will include a large excavator, a crane, a grader, dump truck, and other heavy machinery. The work would occur in July – September 2017. One of these access roads crosses Brush Creek.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) 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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and

(3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

*/s/ Caitlin SH Colson*

Caitlin SH Colson

Environmental Engineer

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 21, 2017

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

## Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist 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-Ross Access Road Culvert Replacement

---

### Project Site Description

The project is located in the Wind River watershed, Skamania County, Washington. The project area is in the low elevation slopes of the Columbia River Gorge, in the Western Cascades Lowlands and Valleys ecoregion. The ecoregion is dominated by western hemlock and Douglas-fir forests in a low elevation alpine environment. Western red cedar are also present in the project area. The underbrush contains sword fern, lady fern, Oregon grape, grasses and small shrubs. Habitat conditions in the immediate project area are upland riparian, with abundant big leaf maple saplings and alder trees adjacent to the waterway. Brush Creek runs through the site. Brush Creek has an approximately 19 ft. ordinary high watermark at the project location, with a rocky stream bed of boulders and cobbles, riffle pool complexes, and a gradient of approximately 5 % - 7.5 %.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> A survey and Section 106 consultation was completed for the project site. No resources were identified in the vicinity of the work sites. DAHP concurrence on the Areas of Potential Affect was received on 9/14/2015; concurrence on BPA's No Historic Properties Affected determination was received on 11/30/2015.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed work would cause about 0.2 acres of soil disturbance. Construction and excavation would take place within 200 feet of the stream crossing. Excavated materials would be temporarily placed in a location where there would be low to no risk of direct sediment runoff into the creek drainage until they are hauled off for removal. Disturbed soils would be re-sloped/graded and would have seed and straw spread throughout once construction is complete. Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to minimize erosion and sedimentation during construction and post-construction.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status plant species present. Work would be conducted in an existing transmission access road. Impacts to plants and vegetation in the work area will be minimized during construction by establishing work areas and limiting ground disturbance. Disturbed soils will be re-sloped/graded and will have seed and straw spread throughout once construction is complete.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status wildlife species or designated habitat present in the work areas. The work would be performed in the cleared and maintained transmission access road. Impacts to creek habitat due		

to ground disturbance will be minimized and restored upon project completion. The soils will be regraded and revegetated as necessary. Please review the accompanying Effects Determination Memo for the project if additional information is required.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: Brush Creek flows through the work area. Upper Willamette River steelhead and Lower Columbia steelhead may be present in the waterway. BPA has consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding potential adverse effects to endangered anadromous fish. BPA would implement the following measures during construction, as detailed in *Endangered Species Act Section 7 Programmatic Conference and Biological Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for Standard Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species to Administer Maintenance or Rebuild Projects for Transmission Line and Road Access Actions Authorized or Carried Out by the Bonneville Power Administration in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, Section 1.3.1.2 Project Design Criteria – General Construction Measures (PBO)*:

- In-water work timing (bullet number 11), August 1<sup>st</sup> – August 15<sup>th</sup> for the Wind River tributaries
- Fish capture and release (12)
- Fish passage (13)
- Construction discharge water (15)
- Temporary access roads and paths (16)
- Temporary stream crossings (17)
- Equipment, vehicles, power tools (18)
- Site layout and flagging (19)
- Staging, storage, stockpile areas (20)
- Pesticide/preservative treated wood (25)
- Erosion control (26)
- Hazardous material safety (27)
- Dust abatement (29)
- Work area isolation (30)
- Site restoration (31)
- Revegetation (32)

Additionally, an Action Completion Report and a Fish Salvage Report would be filed at the completion of the project.

The proposed project was reviewed and approved by the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) on 6/9/2017 provided that the *NWP 14, Terms and Conditions* are applied, as well as the special conditions outlined in the *Verification Letter*. A *Certificate of Compliance* would be completed and returned to the Corps upon completion of the project.

The Washington Department of Ecology reviewed the project and determined that an individual 401 certification (Washington State 401 Water Quality Certification and Coastal Zone Management Act Consistency) will not be required for this project.

Please review the accompanying Effects Determination Memo for the project if additional information is required.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the work sites.

Work area isolation BMPs will be in place to prevent erosion and turbid waters from entering neighboring waters.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The work would not involve new groundwater wells or ground disturbance that would impact aquifers.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: The work is on an existing access road and will not impact land use.

The site is located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). BPA coordinated with the CRGNSA (7/11/2017), will apply conditions outlined in the *CRGNSA Consistency Determination*, and will provide an erosion and sediment control plan to the CRGNSA prior to construction start.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The bridge would be low profile and would be visually concurrent with the existing access road and transmission right-of-way.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The project would create temporary dust and vehicle emissions due to construction; however, no significant impacts would occur.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: The project would create temporary noise due to construction; however, no significant impacts would occur.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. The project would not have significant adverse impacts on 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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

---

### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA coordinated with DNR consistent with the *Memorandum of Agreement between the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Bonneville Power Administration, Department of Energy for Management Impacts to State Lands from BPA Transmission Line and Access Road Easements*, June 2014. Coordination also occurred with the US Forest Service regarding the CRGNSA.

---

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

Signed: /s/ Caitlin Colcon  
Caitlin SH Colson, EPI-4

Date: July 21, 2017