

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY18 Custer-Ingledow Access Road Improvement Project

Project No.: 2644

Project Manager: Todd Wehner

Location: Whatcom County, Washington

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	Ownership/Land Use
Custer-Ingledow No. 1	8/3, 8/4	04N	1E	05	Private/Rural Residential
Custer-Ingledow No. 1	3/3	04N	1E	26	Private/Rural Residential

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) plans to perform road maintenance to improve approximately 1,900 linear feet, and to construct approximately 150 linear feet, of access roads for the Custer-Ingledow No. 1 transmission line near towers 3/3, 8/3, and 8/4 in Whatcom County, Washington.

Access road work would include: adding one stream and two cross-drain culverts; performing minor blading, shaping, grading and adding rock (improvements) to approximately 1,900 feet of existing serviceable access and structure spur roads and constructing approximately 150 feet of new road; and adding one landing. General equipment used for this type of project includes graders, rollers, excavators, and dump trucks.

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/ Chad Browning

Chad Browning

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 11, 2018

Attachment: 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.

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Project Site Description

Proposed maintenance activities are located in a segment of access road for the Custer-Ingledow No. 1 transmission line near structures 3/3, 8/3, and 8/4, which is near Blaine, WA. There are National Wetland Inventory mapped wetlands that intersect the project area. Elevation (above mean sea level) within the project area ranges from approximately 60 to 125 feet. Vegetation in the project area primarily consists of grasses and shrubs. The project area is privately owned and includes natural land cover. Land use in the surrounding area includes rural development and undeveloped second-growth forest.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist and reviewed by Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). No cultural resources were identified during the survey. DAHP concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on June 28, 2016.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager; interested tribes; DAHP; and the appropriate local, state and Federal agencies. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Access road construction would disturb approximately 2,050 linear feet at a width of 15 feet. BMPs would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.</p>		
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Vegetation removal would be limited to those within the immediate road bed. No Federal or state special-status plant species are recorded in the project area. Any disturbed areas outside the road bed would be reseeded. Vehicles and equipment would be washed prior to entry into project area to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.</p>		

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



Explanation: The area provides minimal wildlife habitat. No Federal or state special-status wildlife species or habitats are recorded in the project area.

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



Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project; and there are no waters containing populations of bull trout or anadromous fish, or their critical habitat within ½ mile of the project area.

Additionally, construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented throughout the project to ensure localized soil disturbance does not cause sedimentation issues for any waterway.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Permanent impacts up to 0.39 acres to 3 distinct wetlands were approved by the Army Corps of Engineers on November 3, 2017, under NWP-12. Impacts would occur from placement of fill material for access road construction. All work would be consistent with approved JARPA and Bank Use Plan.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed work is not anticipated to impact groundwater.

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



Explanation: No change in land use and no specially designated areas identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The new access roads would maintain a historical route of access. No additional vegetation clearing would be required.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar air quality impacts during project implementation are expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise from typical utility line equipment would be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. In fact, the proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power 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, 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: Notification letters would be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to all landowners prior to work.

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

Signed: /s/ Chad Browning

Chad Browning

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: January 11, 2018