

**Categorical Exclusion Determination**  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Rogue-Gold Beach Transmission Line Access Road Culvert-to-Bridge Replacement

**Project No.:** 395562

**Project Manager:** Clint Stanton, Access Road Engineer – TFLF-TPP-3

**Location:** Curry County, Oregon

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace a failed culvert with a bridge over the western fork of Edson Creek, a tributary to the Rogue River, in rural Curry County, OR. The road at this location serves as the primary access road to the BPA's Rogue-Gold Beach No. 1 Transmission Line, as well as local residents and commercial timber companies.

The bridge is necessary to replace a failed culvert that collapsed and washed out during the winter of 2015/2016. A temporary rail-car bridge was previously installed to provide emergency access to the transmission line right-of-way and for adjacent landowners after the original corrugated metal pipe culvert failed. The temporary structure was placed on concrete abutments outside of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). The original culvert collapsed over the course of multiple high water events, breaking into multiple pieces where remnants remain downstream of the crossing. Approximately 14 feet of the failed culvert remains partially embedded within the streambed and is proposed to be removed as part of the overall project during one in-water work season.

BPA would install a permanent 50-foot channel-spanning concrete or steel bridge structure designed to be fish passable. The road approach would be widened and raised in elevation. The bridge would be made to support heavy equipment necessary for maintenance of the transmission line. Rock walls and/or riprap would be placed to protect bridge footings. The new bridge would have the same horizontal alignment as the existing crossing.

During construction, temporary isolation structures, a gravity-fed stream bypass pipe, and screened pumps may be used to dewater the work area so work may be conducted in the dry.

The removal of the culvert remnants embedded in the stream bottom would be done by an excavator head or similar mechanical equipment. All excavation and fill activities would be based from upland locations within the road embankment adjacent to the stream and wetlands. Staging areas would be located in uplands east of the crossing in an existing cleared upland area adjacent to SR 540 (Edson Creek Road), the closest paved road adjacent to the proposed project area.

**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/ John Wiley*

John Wiley

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *April 12, 2018*

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.

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### Project Site Description

A site evaluation was conducted by Otak biologists on February 17, 2016. The proposed work is located on privately held property in a rural area with surrounding landscape of forested hillslopes, stream valley bottom, and rural residential properties. The approximate site elevation is 140 feet above sea level. The project area includes the western fork of Edson Creek, a perennially flowing tributary to the Rogue River. Bankfull width in the project area averages 15 feet, and the active channel width is approximately 10 feet. Edson Creek within the project area has a broad floodplain and meanders through the valley-bottom wetland complex situated at the toe of a hillslope, flowing in a single channel underneath and downstream of the existing bridge, with braided side-channels in wetlands upstream of the crossing. Stream substrate includes gravels and fines, with fines dominating downstream of the crossing due to backwater effects from the crossing and subsequent deposition of gravels. Bank conditions are generally stable with minimal evidence of erosion and scour.

- City, County, State: Unincorporated City of Gold Beach, Curry County, OR
- Legal Description: Township: 36S, Range: 14W, Section: 06
- Latitude/Longitude: approximately 42.482195; -124.39877
- Watershed Name: Gold Beach-Rogue River (HUC 12 – 171003100803)
- Waterbody Name(s): Edson Creek, tributary to Rogue River
- Land Use: Private

### 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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Archaeological inspections were conducted on July 5, 2016 by Heritage Research Associates, Inc. No surface evidence of prehistoric or demonstrably historical artifacts, features, or sites was found in the surveyed project area. OR SHPO concurrence on BPA's no adverse effect determination on was received 10/16/2016. In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity would stop, the area would be secured, and the SHPO and the environmental project lead would be notified.</p>		

**Environmental Resource Impacts**

**No Potential for Significance**

**No Potential for Significance, with Conditions**

**2. Geology and Soils**



Explanation: The project would require some ground-disturbing activities for the installation of the permanent channel- spanning bridge as well as the removal of the failed culvert partially embedded in the streambed. The overall project would reduce soil erosion, scour, and sedimentation in the channel that currently results from backwatering effects from the previous undersized culvert. During construction, BMPs would be employed to reduce erosion and sedimentation into the waterway prior to commencing ground disturbing activities, and would be removed after construction has been completed. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.

**3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)**



Explanation: Approximately 5,663 square feet of upland and wetland vegetation may be temporarily disturbed to restore the stream channel and install the new bridge. Most of the cleared area currently includes a mix of native and non-native wetland and upland herbaceous and shrub vegetation. All trees within the project area would be protected during construction, and all exposed soils would be replanted and stabilized with a native upland or wetland seed mix as appropriate. No federal or state special-status plant species or their habitats were documented to occur within the vicinity or were observed during the field survey due to lack of suitable habitat. T

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



Explanation: No suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species was found to occur within the project area. Seven special-status wildlife species were documented to occur or could potentially occur within 2 miles of the project (refer to the Endangered Species Act Letter of No Effect for this project for further details), including the marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, western snowy plover, short-tailed albatross, leatherback sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, and Olive Ridley sea turtle. There is no suitable habitat for these species within two miles of the project area. Approximately 5,663 square feet of upland shrub/grass and emergent wetland habitat as part of the bridge installation work. Any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be limited to the immediate vegetation removal sites...

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



Explanation: The work would occur within the streambed and floodplain of Edson Creek. The bridge would replace the original culvert and will provide an improvement to floodplain function, stream flow, and fish passage. The regrading of the stream bottom and the addition of streambed gravels would help stabilize the stream channel and minimize scour and erosion, and would allow for normative physical processes within the floodplain corridor. Rock walls and/or riprap that would protect the bridge abutments from scour would be located outside of the active channel width and below grade. The bridge design meets 100-year flood requirements. Removal and fill permits were obtained for the regulated removal and fill ACOE Permit Corps No. NWP-2017-15 & DSL Permit 60677.

Stormwater is expected to be very minimal and limited to the bridge surface. A 1-inch lip on the bridge face would direct runoff from the bridge decking westward to the adjacent upland vegetated slopes at the bridge approach.

All excavation and fill activities would be based from upland locations within the road embankment adjacent to the stream and wetlands. The temporary stream diversion and flow bypass pipe would be installed prior to ground disturbance by mechanical equipment. Staging areas would be located in uplands east of the crossing in an existing cleared upland area adjacent to SR 540 (Edson Creek Road), the closest paved road adjacent to the proposed project area.

Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho (SONCC coho) have been documented to occur in Edson Creek (ODFW 2017). SONCC coho are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Work conducted below OHWM is proposed in 2018 during the ODFW in-water work window (July 15-September 30). A temporary isolation

structures would be used and screened pumps may be used to dewater the isolated in-water work area so that any in-water work may be conducted in the dry. Discharge from pumped water would be allowed to disperse and infiltrate into an upland site prior to reentering any wetland or surface water.

The proposed work is consistent with the programmatic Biological Opinion for BPA's transmission line and road activities—the 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 (SLOPES PBO) (WCR-2014-1600, September 22, 2016). It was determined that, by complying with the project design criteria listed within the SLOPES PBO, potential effects to ESA-listed anadromous salmonids and EFH would be consistent with those evaluated and addressed in the SLOPES PBO.

Select borrow fill material would be imported to raise the road elevation and widen the road embankment per Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) standards. Class 100-riprap would be imported to construct the revetment for abutment protection. Appropriately-sized streambed gravels would be imported for the restored channel. All imported fill material would be from an ODOT-approved source. Material removed from the site would include remnants of the old culvert and native soil material that cannot be utilized within the road prism.

Best Management Practices (BMP) would include (but are not limited to):

- Prior to any demolition or excavation activities, temporary erosion and sediment control measures would be installed to isolate the work area from surface water in the creek.
- Pumping operations would be monitored both during and after construction hours until the in-water work is completed to ensure that isolation measures are not overtopped or compromised.
- Conduct fish salvage by a qualified fisheries biologist using a combination of seining, hand netting and electrofishing, prioritizing the least invasive and most effective techniques.
- All disturbed upland, wetland and riparian areas would be stabilized and revegetated with a native herbaceous seed mix.
- Covering the riprap with soil and stabilizing it with grasses would minimize thermal effects on the channel as opposed to leaving the riprap exposed.
- All soil erosion and sediment control features would not be removed until disturbed areas are revegetated and stabilized.
- All stormwater runoff from the bridge decking would be directed and allowed to infiltrate through vegetated swales adjacent to the bridge approach.
- BMPs would be inspected for effectiveness and condition on a daily basis by the construction contractor.
- Therefore, the project would have temporary construction-related impacts to waterbodies, floodplains, and fish with long-term benefits to fish passage, floodplain access, and restoration of normative fluvial processes within this reach.

#### 6. Wetlands



Explanation: Wetland impacts, that include the stream bed work and adjacent riparian areas, are described in **5.**

**Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** above; permitting would be under the NWP 15 (bridges) and because the project would have a net benefit to waterbodies, no compensatory mitigation would be required.

#### 7. Groundwater and Aquifers



Explanation: Groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted by the proposed project as the project does not include any groundwater withdraws or changes to aquifer recharge areas. The proposed work is limited to the stream channel and existing roadway.

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



Explanation: No change in land use is proposed as part of the project. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There are no residences within visual range of the work limits and the bridge would look visually consistent with the road crossing.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Dust and equipment emissions generated during construction activities are expected to be minimal and temporary in nature. The project would not result in an increase in vehicle emissions as the unpaved road and crossing currently exist, and no service or road expansion is proposed.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise generated from construction is expected to be localized and temporary in nature. Construction is anticipated to last approximately the duration of the in-water work window. The current level of road use is not expected to change, and no operational noise increases are expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The project would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address construction workers and members of the community. Project activities are not anticipated to impact human health or safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery 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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: The Access Road Engineer would contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners prior to project construction.

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

Signed: /s/ John Wiley  
John Wiley EP-4  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 12, 2018