

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fairmount-Port Angeles No. 1 access road maintenance and wood pole replacement
(update to previous categorical exclusions issued April 25, 2017 and September 6, 2017)

PP&A No.: 3734

Project Manager: Tina Edwards

Location: Clallam and Jefferson Counties, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to conduct access road maintenance and replace a deteriorating wood pole structure along the Fairmount-Port Angeles No. 1 transmission line. Originally, the road work and wood-pole replacements were to occur at separate times. The two projects are now proposed to occur simultaneously because the work cannot be completed in the winter weather due to the steep terrain of the area. BPA now proposes to perform both projects during the summer of 2018. This would include routine access road maintenance and reconstruction along several portions of the access road for the Fairmount-Port Angeles No. 1 transmission line, between structures 4/1 and 6/8.

Access road work would occur between structures 4/1 and 6/8 and would include adding 18 ditch reliefs, 10 drain dips, 21 cross-drain culverts, one gate, seven landings, 15 water bars, replacing one culvert, repairing two landings, performing minor blading, shaping, grading, and adding rock (improvements) to approximately 13,275 feet of existing serviceable access and structure spur roads, reconstruction of 4,400 feet of road, and decommissioning of 1,500 feet of road. General equipment used for this type of project includes graders, rollers, bull dozers, excavators, backhoes, and dump trucks.

The wood pole replacement would be for structure 6/7 and the poles would be placed in their current location. General equipment used for this type of work includes line trucks or digger derricks, boom trucks, backhoes, 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/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon – EPR-4

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 20, 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

Proposed maintenance activities are located in a section of access road for the Fairmount-Port Angeles No. 1 transmission line, between structures 4/1 and 7/1, that is approximately 8.5 miles southeast of Sequim, WA, slightly south of and between Sequim Bay and Discovery Bay. There is one mapped wetland between structures 4/3 and 4/5. Elevation (above mean sea level) within the project site ranges from approximately 240 to 1,300 feet, with an average of 950 feet. Land use in the surrounding area consists of public timber lands. The project site and surrounding areas are mostly state forestlands with a few privately and Federally owned parcels. Land use in the surrounding area is primarily forestland.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

| Environmental Resource Impacts | No Potential for Significance | No Potential for Significance, with Conditions |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Historic and Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> A cultural resources review was conducted by Historical Research Associates, Inc. on February 1-2, 2017 for the proposed access road work; WA SHPO concurrence on no adverse effect determination was received July 5, 2017. Lower Elwha Klallam and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribes were consulted, no response received. A cultural resources survey and Section 106 consultation was also completed for the proposed wood pole replacement. No resources were identified in the vicinity of the proposed work areas. Washington DAHP agreed with an effects determination from the survey report on 2/21/17, Log No.: 20176-01-00003-BPA. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological resources (BPA and WA DAHP) would be contacted.</p> | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> Any disturbed areas would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. Storm water BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues.</p> | | |
| 3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> No mapped special-status species present. No vegetation disturbance beyond the existing road prism is expected.</p> | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or designated habitat present within the right-of-way. However, suitable habitat for marbled is present adjacent to the transmission line right-of-way between structures 6/7 to 6/8. There is also a risk of a transient northern spotted owl being temporarily disturbed if it flew over the project. Because this project must occur during the murrelet breeding season, formal consultation was initiated with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was determined that the project is likely to adversely affect the marbled murrelet and</p> | | |

may affect, and is not likely to adversely affect, the northern spotted owl. U.S. Fish and Wildlife agreed with these determinations in a Biological Opinion (01EWF00-2018-F-0665) dated 04/12/2018. Mitigation measures for the project would include include:

- Work would be scheduled as late in the marbled murrelet nesting season as possible, while still ensuring the road work up to the wood pole structure would be completed prior to the outage scheduled for the first week of August, and the rest of road work would be completed before the start of the rain season. Work of any kind is not permitted to begin prior to June 1, 2018.
- During the marbled murrelet nesting season (April 1 to September 23) all work will begin two hours after sunrise and end two hours before sunset. Pre-work meetings occurring within two hours of sunrise will occur off-site at a developed location.
- Absolutely no food scraps of any kind or project-related trash of any kind can be left exposed and unattended for any amount of time. No food may be fed to or left for wildlife. All food and project-related trash must be transported off-site after each work day. The BPA environmental lead will inspect the work area and provide trash management recommendations anytime they are on-site and find trash or food being improperly managed.
- The BPA environmental lead is to be notified immediately upon locating a dead, injured or sick endangered or threatened species specimen.

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

Explanation: There is one mapped stream within the project; a drain dip is proposed within this feature (DD-10). Due to steep grades within and downstream of the project (greater than 20%), this stream has no federal special-status fish presence within the project footprint. To minimize impacts from sediments to downstream listed fish, drain dip construction will be conducted when the stream is dry or, if water is present, the stream will be isolated using sandbags and if necessary, bypassed during the grading activity. Wetland conditions with dense herbaceous vegetation are present immediately up and downstream of the proposed drain dip; no grading work or other impacts will be permitted within areas of vegetation at this location and the downstream drain dip apron will not be constructed.

The drain dip will be constructed within the currently serviceable access road footprint and will not change the character, size, or scope of the road footprint. Therefore, this drain dip construction will not require a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit per 40 CFR 232.3(c)(2).

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: Several wetlands are located between structures 4/3 to 4/5. Landings LA-7, 8, and 9 and associated access roads will be constructed to avoid all impacts within regulated wetland boundaries. Access road work between structures 4/4 to 4/5 has been eliminated to avoid impacts to wetlands. BPA will mark the wetland boundaries in the field and provide GPS boundaries to the contractor.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of ground water proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would not exceed existing road fill.

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

Explanation: All proposed road improvements would occur within the footprints of the existing roads or transmission line and are consistent with existing land use; no specially designated areas are located within the project site.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: All improvements will be at ground level and are limited to existing road prisms and the area

immediately surrounding the transmission lines.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected for a short duration due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary noise is expected for a short duration from road improvement activities during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No known hazardous conditions are known. Completion of this project would increase system stability and reliability to the service area as well as correct the current impairment.

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 Realty Services has been in contact with landowners/managers along the project corridor to allow feedback concerning the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnel Deacon
Jonnel Deacon – EPR-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 20, 2018