

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Thurston-McKenzie Transmission Line Impairment Removals

**PP&A No.:** 3911

**Project Manager:** Natasha Gentry – TELC-TPP-1

**Location:** Lane County, Oregon

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	Ownership/Land Use
THUR-MCKZ No. 1	2/3 to 2/4	17S	2W	21	Private/rural residential
THUR-MCKZ No. 1	3/1 to 3/2	17S	2W	17	Private/rural residential
THUR-MCKZ No. 1	4/5 to 5/1	17S	2W	18	Private/rural residential
THUR-MCKZ No. 1	5/1 to 5/2	17S	3W	13	Private/rural residential
THUR-MCKZ No. 1	5/3 to 5/4	17S	3W	13	Private/rural residential

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to address five line impairments on the Thurston-McKenzie No. 1 line. An impairment is an area where the distance from the electrical conductor to the ground surface is inadequate, per National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards, resulting in a threat to line reliability and posing a risk to public health and safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line, to maintain power delivery in the region, and to ensure the line meets current NESC and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) standards. In order to access the impairment located between structures 3/1 and 3/2, it will be necessary to reconstruct the existing access road.

The proposed project includes the following proposed work:

- Removal and redistribution of soil and/or rock at five locations under the existing transmission lines using mechanical removal. Approximate volume of removal is estimated at 500 cubic yards and would impact approximately 48,665 square feet of land (spread over the five locations) within the right-of-way (ROW).
- Reconstruction of approximately 900 feet of access road. Access road work will include rerocking and excavation of two drain dips.

All of the proposed work would occur within the existing, vegetated right-of-way corridor on hilly terrain with mostly grassy and shrubby vegetation. The impairment sites would be accessed using the existing BPA access roads, through equipment and personnel may be required to traverse off-road to access the proposed sites. All five impairments are on privately-owned land within the BPA right-of-way (ROW). Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of the following: blasting

material and equipment including noise-reducing blast mats, dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, and work trucks. After the impairments have been removed, all areas of bare soil would be covered with a natural fiber erosion control fabric such as jute or coir matting to provide site stabilization. In addition, all exposed soils would be hydroseeded using a Western Oregon native seed mix appropriate for the region based on recommendations from either the Oregon State University Agricultural Extension Office or as directed by the landowner.

**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/ Emma Reinemann*

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 16, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Thurston-McKenzie Transmission Line Impairment Removal at 2/3 to 2/4, 3/1 to 3/2, 4/5/1 to 5/2, and 5/3 to 5/4

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### Project Site Description

The proposed project would be conducted at five locations along the Thurston-McKenzie No. 1 transmission line. The line traverses primarily rural residential/agricultural land just north of the town of Springfield, OR and is located in the BPA Eugene district. The line crosses seasonal streams as well as the Mohawk River and the McKenzie River. The work would be performed within BPA easement on privately owned land.

### 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist and reviewed by the Oregon 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 August 3, 2018.</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>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project includes removal of soil under the transmission lines in five discrete areas identified as impairment sites for a total of 48,665 CY of removal of soil. The soil is proposed to be dispersed on site within the right of way. BMPs would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special status species are present in the project area. Vegetation removal would be limited to the area directly affected by the project and would include grasses, blackberry, shrubs, and wildflowers. Any disturbed areas would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area.</p>		

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

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Due to the cumulative area of impact of the project and proximity to streams, a SWPP would be required for the project. BMPs would be installed to minimize impact to water bodies.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands located within or adjacent to the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Spill prevention measures will be utilized during construction activities. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

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

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality of the area as a result of the proposed activities.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The project would have no significant impacts on air quality; however a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: During project activity all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

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

Description: All activities will be coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann  
Emma Reinemann  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: August 16, 2018