

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Tacoma to Covington No. 3 Access Road Maintenance Project

**PP&A No.:** 4125

**Project Manager:** Richard Ross, Civil Design – TERL-TPP-3

**Location:** King and Pierce Counties, Washington

Township	Range	Section	Transmission Structures	County, State	Ownership
21N	4E	2	9/2-9/3	King County, WA	Private Owners
21N	4E	31	1/5	Pierce County, WA	Puyallup Tribe

**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) proposes to perform routine maintenance along the access roads and structure spur roads of the Tacoma-Covington No. 3 transmission line near structure 1/5 and between structures 9/2 and 9/3. Access road work would include: adding one cross-drain culvert and one drain dip; repairing one landing; and performing minor blading, shaping, grading and adding rock (improvements) to approximately 555 feet of existing serviceable access and structure spur roads; and constructing approximately 670 feet of new road. 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: December 18, 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 two segments of access road for the Tacoma to Covington No. 3 Transmission Line, near structure 1/5 and between structures 9/2 and 9/3 near Auburn, WA. One wetland, Wetland A, and one unnamed tributary were delineated within the project area. Vegetation in the project area primarily consists of grasses and shrubs. Land use within the project area consists of the utility line corridor right-of-way (ROW) and includes dirt and gravel access road, steel-lattice transmission towers, and associated electrical lines. Land use in the surrounding area consists of medium-density residential development and natural, open land.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> On November 17, 2016, BPA initiated consultation with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). On November 17, 2016, DAHP concurred with the APE (2016-11-08287-BPA).</p> <p>A cultural resources review was conducted by Historical Research Associates, Inc. on January 16-17, 2017, for the project area between structures 9/2-9/3; Washington DAHP concurrence on a Determination of No Historic Properties Affected was received July 5, 2017. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe were consulted. No comments were received.</p> <p>A cultural resources review was conducted by Bonneville Power Administration archaeologist Jessica Hennessey on April 20, 2017, for the project area at structure 1/5; BPA provided a Determination of No Historic Properties Affected. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians was consulted. No comments were received.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, BPA would 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. BPA would implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering, and take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.</p>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would occur within the existing road prism (555 feet long by 16 feet wide), new road (670 feet long by 12-16 feet wide) at the cross-drain culvert, and at a landing repair (2,500 sq. ft.). Due to wet soil conditions, work would occur during the dry season (May-September). Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be reseeded. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.</p>		

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Vegetation removal would be limited to those areas within the disturbance footprint as described in the Soils section, above. No Federal or state special-status plant species are mapped within the project area. All areas of soil disturbance would be reseeded. Vehicles and equipment would be washed prior to entry into the project area to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No suitable habitat is present in the project area for listed wildlife species. Low-quality habitat typical of the area would be disturbed. No state or federally-listed wildlife species are mapped within the project area.</p>		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> An unnamed tributary is located within the project area between structures 9/2 and 9/3. This tributary would be entirely avoided during construction.</p>		
6. <b>Wetlands</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Permanent impacts up to 1,895 square feet within a wetland were approved by the Army Corps of Engineers on November 30, 2018, under nationwide permit 14 (NWS-2017-1116). Impacts would occur from placement of fill for access road maintenance and creation and cross-drain culvert installation. All work would be consistent with the approved Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application. In accordance with In-Lieu Fee Use Plan, wetland credits would be purchased prior to project construction.</p>		
7. <b>Groundwater and Aquifers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Groundwater would not be affected by proposed road improvement activities; no new groundwater wells or use of ground water proposed.</p>		
8. <b>Land Use and Specially Designated Areas</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No land use changes are proposed; no specially-designated areas have been identified.</p>		
9. <b>Visual Quality</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All improvements would be at ground level and limited to existing road prisms and the area immediately surrounding the transmission lines. Access roads would visually match existing roads.</p>		
10. <b>Air Quality</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Any fugitive dust or similar air-quality impacts during project construction are expected to be temporary and minimal.</p>		
11. <b>Noise</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Construction noise from typical utility line equipment would be temporary and localized.</p>		

**Environmental Resource  
Impacts**

**No Potential for  
Significance**

**No Potential for Significance, with  
Conditions**

**12. Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety. 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:

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### Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The King County portion of the project is privately owned. Property owners would be notified prior to construction.

The Pierce County portion of the project is located within Puyallup Tribal land. Kristen Currens, at Mason, Bruce & Girard, Inc. - Biologist contacted Russ Ladley, Puyallup Tribe Natural Resource Specialist June 7, 2017, via phone and discussed the proposed activities. Mr. Ladley expressed no concerns and Ms. Currens followed-up the phone conversation with an emailed map and request for any additional input; none was received.

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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/ Chad Browning  
Chad Browning  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: December 18, 2018