

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Pearl-Marion Access Road Work at Miles 35/3 to 36/2

**PP&A No.:** 3934

**Project Manager:** Donna Martin – TELF-TPP-3

**Location:** Lane County, Oregon

**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 conduct access road construction and maintenance along the Pearl-Marion No. 1 transmission line. In order for BPA to access to transmission structures 35/3 to 36/2, it is necessary to maintain the existing access road, and to construct approximately 800 feet of new road south of structure 35/5. BPA proposes to conduct road work that would involve clearing of vegetation, blading, shaping, rocking, compaction, and the installation of landings and drain dips. Road maintenance on the existing road would all take place within the existing road prism. The new road is proposed to be constructed in an area that is currently farmed for trees. Equipment used for this type of project includes graders, dump trucks, backhoes, and excavators.

The areas of improvement would be accessed using existing BPA and privately-owned access roads, though equipment and personnel may be required to traverse off-road for staging. All work would be completed on privately-owned land within the BPA right-of-way (ROW).

**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/ Katey Grange*

Date: November 12, 2019

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

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: Pearl-Marion Access Road Work at Miles 35/3 to 36/2

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#### Project Site Description

The project area is located approximately 7 miles northeast of the town of Stayton, Oregon in the BPA Eugene district. The work would be performed within BPA easement on privately owned land. The proposed work would occur within and adjacent to the ROW corridor on flat to hilly terrain. The project area is surrounded by agricultural fields. The area on either side of the existing access road between structures 35/3 and 35/5 is a wetland; however, the road prism has been previously filled with rock and no longer exhibits wetland characteristics. East Fork Drift Creek crosses the road approximately 200 feet north of structure 35/5.

#### 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> BPA initiated Area of Potential Effect (APE) consultation with Oregon Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde on June 20, 2019. The project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist. No cultural resources were identified during the survey and BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect to historic properties. DAHP concurred with BPA's no adverse effect to historic properties determination on July 24, 2019. No additional responses were received.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> 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 majority of the work would occur in the existing road prism, where a road-base of rock already exists. Approximately 800 feet of access road would be constructed. BMPs would be used to prevent erosion and disturbed areas would be restabilized.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<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. Any disturbed areas outside the road prism would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.</p>		

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



Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. The project would result in additional noise generation during construction; however, the project area is located in a farmed area that is routinely maintained with agricultural equipment, so wildlife in the area would be accustomed to this noise level. The proposed activities would therefore have no effect on wildlife.

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



Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Federal/state special-status species fish are not known to inhabit the stream that crosses the project area. Erosion control best management practices (BMPs) would be utilized during construction to prevent sedimentation into the streambed; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Wetlands are present on both sides of the existing road prism between structures 35/3 and 35/5. The road prism itself is not a wetland as it has been previously filled with rock and no longer exhibits wetland characteristics. Project activities near wetlands would be limited to within the road prism and staging areas would not be allowed in this area. No ground disturbance would be conducted within wetlands and BMPs would be implemented to prevent sedimentation in any adjacent wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination. Access road excavation would not be to a depth that would intersect ground water.

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



Explanation: No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The proposed activities would result in the conversion of existing undeveloped land into new, gravel road. The new road would be consistent with the existing visual character of the ROW and surrounding access roads. Additionally, the project area is located on privately-owned farmland that is not visible to the public.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The project would have a small, temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated 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 would 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: November 12, 2019