

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Santiam-Alvey No. 1 Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement and Access Road Maintenance

**Project No.:** PP&A# 3725, WO# 430112, 430111, 430119, 430164

**Project Manager:** Sarah Hall, Access Road Engineer – TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Lane, Douglas and Coos counties, Oregon; Bonneville Power Administration, North Bend District

**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 11 wood pole structures and to perform routine road maintenance, repair and improvements on several existing transmission line rights-of-way that are in need of maintenance. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing transmission line infrastructure and roadway safety. The proposed project would include the following features:

- Replacement of 11 wood pole transmission structures (in-kind)
- Reconstruction of 0.50 miles of existing access roads (re-shape and rock) and improvement of 1.49 miles of existing access roads (resurface and rock), including associated drainage features (water bars, cross drain culverts, drain dips)
  - Install 2 new and repair 1 existing culvert
  - Install 2 new and repair 1 water bar
- Install & repair 2 gates
- Construct 1 turn around
- Construct/Improve 10 landings at the wood-pole structures (50' x 50')

Project work includes but is not limited to; grading and shaping of landings and roads, installation of geotextile material, placement of rock on top of geotextile material, compacting road surface, and installation and cleaning of gates and drainage structures.

If prior to or during construction activities the proposed action may result in adverse impacts to resources that are not described within this categorical exclusion, coordination with the appropriate agencies and a reevaluation of effects may be warranted.

**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/ Benjamin J. Tilley  
Benjamin J. Tilley  
Natural Resource Specialist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason                      Date: May 25, 2018  
Stacy L. Mason  
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:** Santiam-Alvey No. 1 Transmission Line Wood Pole Replacement and Access Road Maintenance

### Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in rural Lane, Douglas and Coos counties, Oregon. Land ownership within the project area is privately held, except for one location in Coos County owned by the BLM. Land use within the project vicinity includes commercial forestry, agricultural tree farms, and open pasture. All work locations are in upland areas within the Oregon Coast Mountain Range.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure(s)	Township/Range/Section	County, State	Land Ownership/Use
Wendson-Tahkenitch #1	8/4	19S, 11W, 20	Lane, OR	Commercial Forestry
	18/1	21S, 12W, 2	Douglas, OR	Commercial Forestry
Tahkentich-Reedsport #1	2/1	21S, 12W, 23	Douglas, OR	Commercial Forestry
Fairview-Bandon #1	3/3, 4/2	27S, 11W, 29	Coos, OR	BLM
	10/1	28S, 12W, 14	Coos, OR	Rural Residential
	11/1	28S, 12W, 22	Coos, OR	Commercial Forestry
	25/2	28S, 14W, 33	Coos, OR	Commercial Forestry
	26/6	28S, 14W, 32	Coos, OR	Agriculture (Cranberry Bogs)
Fairview-Bandon #2	20/3	28S, 14W, 32	Coos, OR	Agriculture (Cranberry Bogs)

### 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"/>

Explanation: Determination letters of a review of historic properties and surveys for archaeological resources were sent to tribes and the Oregon SHPO in early 2018. On April 4, 2018, the Oregon SHPO concurred the lack of potential for adverse effects to archaeological resources.

As expressed by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians during the Section 106 consultation process, BPA updated its Inadvertent Discovery Plan to include the statement that no photographs of ancestral remains will be taken, and language has been included stating that work would not resume until a

treatment plan is developed and agreed upon in consultation with the SHPO and appropriate Tribes is set in place.

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. Work would not commence until the SHPO has cleared the area.

2. **Geology and Soils**



Explanation: All wood pole replacements will be in-kind and be placed in the same location as the existing poles. Minor augering of the existing holes may be necessary. The proposed roadway improvements would likely conserve soil resources by reducing erosion and degradation of the existing dirt/gravel road by channeling surface water run off to upgraded drainage features. Existing roads currently do not manage water off surfaces without erosion. All disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be reseeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region immediately following construction in order to further stabilize soils. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. Therefore, the proposed action would have limited impacts to geology and soils.

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



Explanation: The proposed project is located in rural Lane, Douglas, and Coos counties, Oregon, in upland coniferous forest habitat. No federal or state special status plant species that have the potential to occur in within the project area or in the immediate vicinity due to lack of suitable habitat. No trees would be removed as a result of the project. All disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be reseeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region immediately following construction or during the appropriate seeding window. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species and limited impacts to other native and non-native vegetation.

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. An official federally-listed species list was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation database (IPaC) on February 15, 2018. No federally-listed or proposed listed species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS or NMFS have been documented to occur within the proposed project limits. Therefore, the project would have no impact to special-status wildlife species. The proposed project actions would mainly occur within the existing road prism; therefore, any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be temporary in nature and limited to the construction window. Therefore, the project would have no impacts to federally-listed wildlife and limited impacts to other wildlife species.

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



Explanation: There are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. The project is located in upland forested areas above most seasonal waterways. All cross drains and culverts are for potential seasonal flows. No impacts to watercourses, floodplains, or fish are expected to result from the proposed project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present in the project area or immediately downstream of the proposed work location. Therefore, the project would have no impacts to wetlands.

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 aquifer recharge areas.

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. The project would not result in changes or impacts to land use or specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: There are no residences within visual range of the work limits. The proposed project feature is consistent with existing roads. There would be no impacts to visual resources.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The proposed project is expected to reduce dust generation and improve air quality along the rural access road by reducing erosion of the existing roadway. Minor vehicle emissions during construction would be temporary in duration. There would be no impacts to air quality.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours is expected. Construction is expected to last less than four weeks. 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 any hazards during the proposed work. 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**

The Access Road Engineer will contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners prior to project construction. BLM Coos District personnel have reviewed the proposed project on their lands and have issued appropriate permits for 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/ Benjamin J. Tilley  
Benjamin Tilley EPI-Alvey

Date: May 25, 2018