

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF GRAVEL ROADS ON GABLE MOUNTAIN HANFORD SITE, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

PROPOSED ACTION

The U.S. Department of Energy proposes to conduct routine maintenance on portions of the existing roads on Gable Mountain that are unimproved (i.e., gravel). The first road runs north from Route 11 to the 623B Backup Radio Repeater Facility at the east end of Gable Mountain. The portion of this road that is paved runs from Route 11 to the old Plutonium Vault (former 213-J Vault). The second road runs east from Route 4 North to the 630 Plant Microwave Tower/Equipment Facility at the west end of Gable Mountain. The portion of this road that is paved runs from Route 4 North to the old Near Surface Test Facility (former Basalt Waste Isolation Project Site).

LOCATION OF ACTION

The proposed action is along the top ridge of Gable Mountain, near the 623B Backup Radio Repeater Facility on the east side and the 630 Plant Microwave Tower/Equipment Facility on the west side. Access to these communications facilities is via two existing partially gravel roads extending north from Route 11 and east from Route 4 North to the summit of Gable Mountain. Gable Mountain covers approximately 14 square kilometers, reaching elevations of 330 and 339 meters on the eastern and western summits, respectively. Gable Mountain and Gable Butte are located north of the 200 Area Central Plateau and form the only extensive outcrops of the Columbia River Basalt Group in the central portion of the Pasco Basin. Both Gable Mountain and Gable Butte are traditional cultural properties of religious, ceremonial, or other significance to Native American Tribes. Figure 1 depicts the general location of the proposed action on Gable Mountain.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action involves the blading of the gravel portions of existing roads that run north from Route 11 and east from Route 4 North to the 623B and 630 communications facilities on Gable Mountain. Blading will be accomplished with a road grader, or equivalent equipment, and involves two passes in each direction of the gravel road. The blading will effectively remove the vegetation from the middle of the gravel road, smooth the "washboard" surfaces, and fill in the water-eroded sections of the road. There are no plans to add new gravel or widen the existing road. A water truck will be available for fugitive dust and fire control. During road blading operations rocks can generate sparks creating a potential fire hazard. The bladed road will also provide a fire break to control the spread of potential wildland fires.

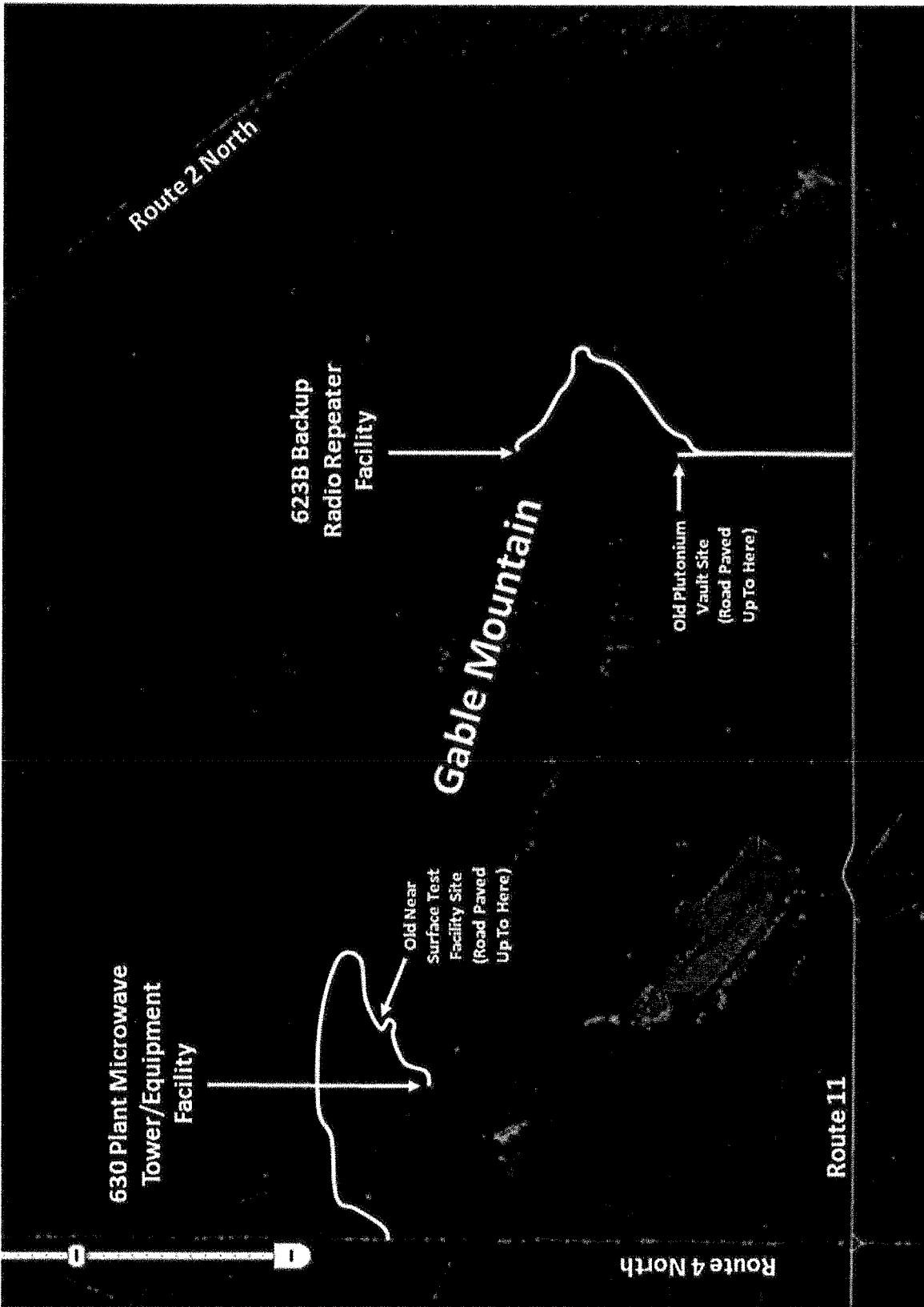


Figure 1. Gable Mountain Roads (Paved and Gravel) to the 623B and 630 Communications Facilities

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION TO BE APPLIED

The Categorical Exclusion (CX) listed in Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1021, *National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures*, Subpart D, Appendix B that will be applied to the proposed action is B1.3. The authority for the regulation is 42 U.S.C. 7101 *et seq.*; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; and 50 U.S.C. 2401 *et seq.* The source for the regulation is 57 FR 15144, April 24, 1992, unless otherwise noted. Application of CX B1.3 is discussed further in the section entitled, "Eligibility Criteria."

B1.3 - Routine maintenance activities and custodial services for buildings, structures, rights-of-way, infrastructures (e.g., pathways, roads, and railroads), vehicles and equipment, and localized vegetation and pest control, during which operations may be suspended and resumed. Custodial services are activities to preserve facility appearance, working conditions, and sanitation, such as cleaning, window washing, lawn mowing, trash collection, painting, and snow removal. Routine maintenance activities, corrective (that is, repair), preventive, and predictive, are required to maintain and preserve buildings, structures, infrastructures, and equipment in a condition suitable for a facility to be used for its designated purpose. Routine maintenance may result in replacement to the extent that replacement is in kind and is not a substantial upgrade or improvement. In kind replacement includes installation of new components to replace outmoded components if the replacement does not result in a significant change in the expected useful life, design capacity, or function of the facility. Routine maintenance does not include replacement of a major component that significantly extends the originally intended useful life of a facility (for example, it does not include the replacement of a reactor vessel near the end of its useful life). Routine maintenance activities include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Repair of facility equipment, such as lathes, mills, pumps, and presses;
- (b) Door and window repair or replacement;
- (c) Wall, ceiling, or floor repair;
- (d) Reroofing;
- (e) Plumbing, electrical utility, and telephone service repair;
- (f) Routine replacement of high-efficiency particulate air filters;
- (g) Inspection and/or treatment of currently installed utility poles;
- (h) Repair of road embankments;
- (i) Repair or replacement of fire protection sprinkler systems;

- (j) Road and parking area resurfacing, including construction of temporary access to facilitate resurfacing;
- (k) Erosion control and soil stabilization measures (such as reseeded and revegetation);
- (l) Surveillance and maintenance of surplus facilities in accordance with DOE Order 5820.2, "Radioactive Waste Management";
- (m) Repair and maintenance of transmission facilities, including replacement of conductors of the same nominal voltage, poles, circuit breakers, transformers, capacitors, cross arms, insulators, and downed transmission lines, in accordance, where appropriate, with 40 CFR part 761 (Polychlorinated Biphenyls Manufacturing, Processing, Distribution in Commerce, and Use Prohibitions);
- (n) Routine testing and calibration of facility components, subsystems, or portable equipment (including but not limited to, control valves, in-core monitoring devices, transformers, capacitors, monitoring wells, lysimeters, weather stations, and flumes); and
- (o) Routine decontamination of the surfaces of equipment, rooms, hot cells, or other interior surfaces of buildings (by such activities as wiping with rags, using strippable latex, and minor vacuuming), including removal of contaminated intact equipment and other materials (other than spent nuclear fuel or special nuclear material in nuclear reactors).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In applying categorical exclusions under the provisions of 10 CFR 1021.410(b) to specific proposed actions, DOE must determine that:

- (1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D of the regulation;
- (2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. Extraordinary circumstances are unique situations presented by specific proposals, such as scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; or unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources within the meaning of section 102(2)(E) of NEPA; and
- (3) The proposal is not "connected" [40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 CFR 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 of the regulation.

The proposed action fits within the class of actions described in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, CX B1.3 and will involve *“Routine maintenance on infrastructures (i.e., roads) ... to correct (i.e., repair) the infrastructure to preserve its designated purpose ... through road resurfacing.”* There are no extraordinary circumstances that affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposed action. However, since Gable Mountain is considered a traditional cultural property of religious, ceremonial, or other significance to Native American Tribes, the proposed action will be conducted in accordance with applicable requirements of the *Gable Mountain and Gable Butte Resource Management Plan* (DOE/RL-2008-17), as discussed in the Cultural Resources Review section. The proposed action is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

The proposed action fits within the class of actions listed in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, CX B1.3, as discussed above. For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements to fit within the class that must be addressed:

INTEGRAL ELEMENTS 10 CFR 1021, SUBPART D, APPENDIX B	
Would the Proposed Action:	Comment or explanation:
Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, including requirements of DOE and/or Executive Orders?	No. Applicable laws, statutory, regulatory, permit requirements for environmental safety and health; including requirements of DOE and/or Executive Orders, will not be violated by the proposed action.
Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery or treatment facilities (including incinerators)? The proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery or treatment actions.	No. The proposed action will not require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities.
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?	No. The proposed action will not disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products if they existed. There will be no uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.
Adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources including, but not limited to: (i) Property (e.g., sites, buildings, structures, objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by Federal, state, or local governments or property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; (ii) Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat), Federally-proposed or candidate species or their habitat or state-listed	No. The proposed action will not adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources. Gable Mountain is considered a traditional cultural property on the Hanford Site and is eligible for the National Register as part of the Gable Mountain/Gable Butte Cultural District. The proposed action will be performed in accordance with applicable requirements of the Gable Mountain and Gable Butte Resource Management Plan. Also, the Native American Tribes and State Historic Preservation Office were consulted with regards to the proposed action and a no potential

<p>endangered or threatened species or their habitat;</p> <p>(iii) Wetlands regulated under the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) and floodplains;</p> <p>(iv) Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, and marine sanctuaries;</p> <p>(v) Prime agricultural lands;</p> <p>(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region);</p> <p>(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rainforests?</p>	<p>to cause effect determination was made.</p> <p>Based on the ecological resources review, there will be no adverse impacts on federally-listed threatened or endangered species, federally-proposed or candidate species, state-listed species, or their habitat.</p> <p>There will be no adverse impacts of the proposed action on wetlands and floodplains; federal/state designated wilderness areas, national parks, national landmarks, wild/scenic rivers, wildlife refuges, or marine sanctuaries; prime agricultural lands; special water sources or wellhead protection areas; tundra, coral reefs, or rainforests.</p>
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CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES REVIEW

Cultural Resources Review

Gable Mountain and Gable Butte are prominent features of the central Hanford Site landscape and are highly revered by Native American Tribes with historical ties to the Hanford Site. Gable Mountain and Gable Butte are considered sacred sites and are used periodically by local Native American Tribes for ceremonies, spirit questing, and other cultural practices and activities.

Gable Mountain was listed on the Washington State Register of Historic Places as an archaeological district in 1974. Sixteen sites were recorded in 1987 to complete the National Register nomination of Gable Mountain. Gable Mountain was determined eligible for the National Register in 1990 as part of the Gable Mountain and Gable Butte Cultural District. Since Gable Mountain is considered a traditional cultural property, the proposed action will be conducted in accordance with applicable requirements of the *Gable Mountain and Gable Butte Resource Management Plan*.

The *Gable Mountain and Gable Butte Resource Management Plan* identifies the proposed action as a routine activity for which a blanket cultural resources review will be completed. Based on information contained in the *Gable Mountain and Gable Butte Resource Management Plan* and consultation with Native American Tribes and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the proposed action has no potential to cause effect provided the activities are implemented as described herein. This includes no new ground-disturbing activities, vehicles remaining on existing roads, off-road access limited to on-foot travel, all employees receiving cultural sensitivity training, and employees instructed to not pick up artifacts, rocks, or vegetation.

Workers will be directed to watch for cultural materials (e.g., bones, artifacts, etc.) during all work activities. If any cultural materials are encountered, work in the vicinity of the discovery

will stop and a qualified cultural resources specialist will be notified to assess the significance of the find, and if necessary, arrange for mitigation of impacts to the find.

Ecological Resources Review

The proposed action will be implemented entirely within areas previously disturbed by construction activities associated with the existing gravel roads. The proposed action is not likely to result in adverse impacts to protected species, priority habitats, or other biological or ecological resources of concern. However, there is a potential for ground nesting birds, such as killdeer or common nighthawks, to use the open dirt/gravel patches scattered over the proposed action site.

Ground-disturbing activities, such as those associated with the use of heavy road construction equipment, may transport, spread and increase noxious weed species. When feasible, wheels and undercarriages of vehicles should be washed to minimize transport of weed seeds. Also, if work is conducted during the nesting season (i.e., approximately March through July) and if any nesting birds (if not a nest, a pair of birds of the same species or a single bird that will not leave the area when disturbed) are encountered, or bird defensive behaviors (i.e., flying at workers, refusal to leave area, strident vocalizations) are observed during work, a qualified Hanford Site biological resources specialist will be contacted for further consultation and direction.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS CONSIDERED

The following checklist summarizes environmental impacts that were considered:

IMPACT TO AIR

	Would the proposed action:	YES	NO
1.	Result in more than minor and temporary gaseous discharges to the environment?		X
2.	Release other than nominal and temporary particulates or drops to the atmosphere?		X
3.	Result in more than minor thermal discharges?		X
4.	Increase offsite radiation dose to >0.1 mrem (40 CFR 61. Subpart H)?		X

IMPACT TO WATER

	Would the proposed action:	YES	NO
5.	Discharge any liquids to the environment?	X	
6.	Discharge heat to surface or subsurface water?		X
7.	Release soluble solids to natural waters?		X
8.	Provide Interconnection between aquifers?		X
9.	Require installation of wells?		X
10.	Require a Spill Prevention Countermeasure and Control Plan (40 CFR 112 and 761)?		X
11.	Violate water quality standards (WAC 713-200, Table 1)?		X

IMPACT TO LAND

	Would the proposed action:	YES	NO
12.	Conflict with existing zoning or land use?		X
13.	Involve hazardous, radioactive, PCB, or asbestos waste?		X
14.	Cause erosion?		X
15.	Require an excavation permit?		X
16.	Disturb an undeveloped area?		X

GENERAL

	Would the proposed action:	YES	NO
17.	Disturb Arid Lands Ecology or Wahuake Slope Reserves?		X
18.	Cause other than a minor increase in noise level?		X
19.	Make a long-term commitment of large quantities of nonrenewable resources?		X
20.	Require new utilities or modifications to utilities?		X
21.	Use pesticides, carcinogens, or toxic chemicals?		X
22.	Require a radiation work permit?		X

The following is a more detailed explanation of environmental impacts marked "YES" in the checklist:

5. Discharge any liquids to the environment – The proposed action will use water to control fugitive dust during road blading operations. Also, water will be available for use to control potential fire hazards due to sparks generated during blading operations when striking rocks.

DETERMINATION

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer authorized under DOE Order 451.1A, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions described in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, CX B1.3 and satisfies the requirements of 10 CFR 1021.410(b). The proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.



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Date

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