

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Big Eddy -Troutdale Transmission Line, Structures 14/1 to 15/3 Access Road Maintenance Project

Project No.: 395569

Project Manager: Clint Stanton, Access Road Engineer – TFLF-TPP-3

Location: Wasco County, OR

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to perform routine road maintenance, repair, and improvements on the Big Eddy-Troutdale Transmission Line Infrastructure from Structures 14/1 to 15/3. The proposed work is necessary to preserve or repair existing infrastructure, maintain roadway safety, manage storm water run-off, and includes the following features:

- 9,000 lineal ft of roadway improvement (gravel road improvements);
- 4,000 lineal ft of roadway reconstruction;
- 50 water bars;
- 5 drain dips;
- 1 24" culvert in-kind replacement at 36' in length;
- 1 culvert cleaning/clearing of debris.

The project would include reshaping, grading, and compacting existing road surface as well as hauling, placing, and shaping of crushed rock. In addition, one 24" corrugated metal pipe (CMP) culvert at 36' in length is proposed to be replaced in-kind, and another culvert is proposed for cleaning/clearing of debris. The above described road maintenance activities are proposed for construction in 2016.

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/ John Wiley

John Wiley

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 17, 2016

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

ecc:

Clint Stanton, TFLF-TPP-3

Mandy Flett, Otak – mandy.flett@otak.com

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

A biologist from Otak, Inc. conducted a site visit on March 1, 2016 in order to field verify habitat conditions for listed species and to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project within the action area. The proposed project is located in rural Wasco County, OR, approximately 10-miles southwest of The Dalles, OR. Land use within the project vicinity forested hillslopes, includes grasslands/pasture, and riparian corridor of Brown Creek and tributaries. The approximate site elevation is 2,000-2,400' above sea level.

- City, County, State: Approximately 10-miles SW of The Dalles, Wasco County, OR
- Legal Description: Township: 2N, Range: 12E, Section 19
- Latitude/Longitude: approximately 45.554174; -121.370173
- Watershed Name: Chenoweth Creek Watershed (tributary to the Columbia River)
- Waterbody Name(s): Brown Creek, unnamed tributary to Brown Creek (tributaries to Chenoweth Creek)
- Land Use: Private

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explanation:

Based on the results of a desktop analysis of the proposed undertaking which considered the nature of the proposed action, its location, and setting, previous archaeological inventories conducted and archaeological features recorded in that area, as well as on-going consultations with OR SHPO discussing when Section 106 consultation is appropriate; BPA determined that this proposed undertaking has no potential to impact cultural resources. In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area would be secured, and the SHPO and the environmental project lead must be notified. Work would not commence until the SHPO has cleared the area. (Pers comm. Brian O'Donnchadha, June 9, 2016)

2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Explanation:

The project would require some ground-disturbing activities for newly constructed road spurs but would be generally limited to the existing road prism. No prime or unique farmlands would be

affected.

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



Explanation:

No trees have been identified for removal. Some herbaceous and scrub/shrub vegetation may be disturbed or removed to construct new road elements or during replacement and cleaning of the culverts. No special-status plant species or their habitats were documented to occur within the vicinity or were observed during the field survey.

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



Explanation:

A site evaluation was conducted by an Otak biologist on March 1, 2016, to evaluate site conditions and the surrounding environment. 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 28, 2016, and updated on June 8, 2016. No federally-listed or proposed listed species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS have been documented to occur within 2 miles of the proposed project limits. Therefore, the project would have no impact to special-status wildlife species. The majority of the project actions would occur within the existing road prism; therefore, any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be very limited. See the Endangered Species Act Letter of No Effect for this project for further details.

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



Explanation:

The project proposes to replace one culvert on an unnamed tributary to Brown Creek and to clean one culvert on Brown Creek. Brown Creek is a third order tributary and is headwaters to Chenoweth Creek. Both culverts are located approximately 5.5-6 miles upstream of the mouth of Brown Creek. A query of the StreamNet database made in June of 2016 documents the upstream-most extent of anadromous fish passage occurring at RM 1.75, more than 4 miles downstream of the proposed culvert repairs. Though no barrier information is provided at RM 1.75, fish distribution is likely limited to this point due to stream size and intermittent flow. The USGS 7.5-minute topographical map indicates that Brown Creek and its tributaries are intermittent, as is common for higher order tributaries on the eastern slope of the Cascade Range. In addition, StreamNet documents two partial barriers on Brown Creek at RM 0.20 and 0.98 at perched culverts, noting that the stream goes dry during part of the year. Therefore, no ESA-listed fish or their designated critical habitats would occur within the project area. Presence of resident fish and other aquatic species in both waterbodies is assumed. An ODFW Aquatic Scientific Collection Permit would be obtained prior to construction. Work proposed in water would be conducted during the ODFW in-water work window for this location (July 15-September 30). The work as proposed is exempt from Corps Section 404 and DSL permit applications.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation:

NWI coverage maps indicate that no wetlands are present within the project limits, and no wetlands were found during the field surveys.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation:

The proposed work is limited to the ground surface.

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



Explanation:

No change in land use and no specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation:

The proposed project features are consistent with existing roads.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation:

Dust generated from project activities is expected to be minimal and temporary in nature.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

Noise generated from construction is expected to be localized and temporary in nature.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

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:

- 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Land ownership within the project limits is privately held. The Access Road Engineer would contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners prior to project construction.

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

Signed: /s/ John Wiley
John Wiley EP -4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: June 17, 2016