

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Timber Tap to Keeler-Tillamook Temporary Bridge and Access Road Maintenance

**Project No.:** 332141

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

**Location:** Washington County, OR; BPA Chemawa 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 install a temporary bridge over an unnamed tributary to Beaver Creek and regrade a section of access road for BPA's Timber Tap to Keeler-Tillamook transmission line in rural Washington County, OR. The creek has completely bypassed the two existing culverts and has washed away the access road stream crossing's fill material north of BPA's transmission line structure 7/7. With no current access road stream crossing, there is no way for personnel or equipment to access transmission line structures 7/7 and 7/6.

BPA proposes to place a temporary crossing structure at the location of the previous culvert crossing with a pre-fabricated wooden bridge structure or equivalent. The two parallel culverts that had been at this location appear to have become blocked with debris during a singular or multiple high flow events, the stream downcut to parent material and was forced to bypass the culverts, cutting a new channel northward of the culverts, and eroding the former access road crossing.

The culverts remain imbedded in the south bank and are not within the active channel width and do not pass flow. The temporary bridge crossing structure is anticipated to remain in place until a permanent crossing structure is installed. Compliance under NEPA and other applicable state and federal regulations for a permanent crossing structure and removal of the derelict culverts will be conducted under a separate permitting effort.

No in-water work is proposed, as the installation of the temporary crossing structure will occur outside of the wetted width. Temporary bridge footings will be placed at the toe of the bank below the ordinary high water (OHW) in order to support the crossing structure. Rip-rap may be placed at the base of the footings in order to prevent scour from dislodging the footings, however, no rip-rap will be placed below the wetted width. The bridge and footings will be placed by machinery stationed on the bank and/or by hand.

In addition, approximately 1,179 lineal feet of roadway improvements (base rock/gravel) are proposed along the access road extending from the stream crossing south to structure 7/6.

The above described road maintenance activities are proposed to be conducted during 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/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 21, 2016

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:** Timber Tap to Keeler-Tillamook Temporary Bridge and Access Road Maintenance

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### Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in rural Washington County, OR. Land use within the project vicinity includes the BPA right-of-way clearing, forested hillslopes and a county road (Timber Road). The approximate site elevation is 640' above sea level. The work would take place on existing BPA access road over and adjacent to an unnamed headwater tributary to Beaver Creek. The immediate work area occurs within the existing BPA right-of-way. Vegetation within the right-of-way and within the area proposed for roadway improvement consists of thick native and non-native shrubs, grasses and forbs. Immediately adjacent to the right-of-way are tracts of mid-successional coniferous forested lands and Timber Road to the east. Riparian vegetation within the project area consist primarily of native shrub species and well as native and non-native grasses, sedges and forbs. The proposed work occurs directly above an unnamed headwater tributary to Beaver Creek, a tributary to Gales Creek which in turn is a tributary to the Tualatin River. Lower Columbia River steelhead (NMFS threatened) and Lower Columbia River coho salmon (NMFS threatened) have been documented to occur within the project location within the unnamed tributary (ODFW pers comm, August 2016).

### 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 has determined that this is the type of activity that has minimal potential to cause effects to historic properties. No disturbance will extend below the vertical or beyond the horizontal limits of previous construction or disturbance.</p> <p>. 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.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would require minimal ground-disturbing activities in order to install the temporary bridge footings. BMPs to reduce erosion and sedimentation into the waterway will be employed prior to commencing ground disturbing activities and will be removed after construction has been completed. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected.</p>		

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



Explanation: Riparian and upland vegetation may be temporarily disturbed or removed during construction in the immediate area of the proposed temporary bridge crossing. Vegetation within the proposed project footprint consists of common native and non-native shrubs, forbs and grasses. Bare soils will be revegetated with native seed and/or suitable riparian plants after construction is complete.

Four protected plant species documented to occur within Washington County include the Bradshaw's desert-parsley, Kincaid's lupine, Nelson's checker-mallow, and the Willamette daisy. A biologist from Otak, Inc. conducted a site assessment on June 14, 2016 to determine the suitability for federally protected plant species to occur within the proposed construction area. No suitable habitat for these four federally protected plant species occurs within the proposed construction footprint.

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



Explanation: The June 14, 2016 site assessment found no suitable habitat for special-status wildlife within the project area. An official federally-listed species list was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (IPaC) prior to field surveys and updated on August 24, 2016, for species that occur within two miles of the proposed project site.

The IPaC list indicated that the marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, and Fender's blue butterfly have the potential to occur within two miles of the project area—no suitable habitat was found for marbled murrelet or Fender's blue butterfly, and suitable habitat for the northern spotted owl (foraging, dispersal and capable habitat) may be present in patches surrounding the project area.

However, the project would not remove suitable habitat and would not produce noise above ambient background levels, create visual disturbances outside of normal conditions, or otherwise result in effects to the northern spotted owl. The project actions are not likely to result in impacts to any wildlife species or their habitats given the nature of the proposed construction (placement of a temporary bridge, and placement of rock on an existing roadway). Therefore, the project would have no impacts to federally-listed wildlife and no to minimal impacts to other wildlife species.

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



Explanation: The unnamed stream within the project area is a headwater tributary to Beaver Creek, which in turn is a tributary to the Tualatin River. Upper Willamette River steelhead (NMFS threatened) and Lower Columbia River coho salmon (NMFS threatened) have been documented to occur within the project area (ODFW pers. Comm. 2016). In addition, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act identifies and regulates Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for the Pacific Coast salmon fishery, including coho, Chinook and pink salmon. EFH is defined as the geographic extent of freshwater water bodies currently or historically occupied by managed salmon. Since coho salmon are documented to occur within the tributary, EFH for coho salmon is established for this tributary. Other resident fish and aquatic species presence in this tributary is assumed.

The proposed work is limited to outside of the wetted width and includes placement of bridge footings and rip-rap at the toe of the bank, and placement of the bridge decking at the top of bank. All concrete elements will be pre-cast off site or within an upland location on site. Fueling of any equipment will be conducted at least 100' from any waterbody. Erosion and sediment control measures may be installed

at the toe of bank to prevent materials from entering the waterway during construction. No in-water work is proposed.

After construction, higher flows are likely to encounter the bridge footings and any rip-rap placed around the footings to prevent localized scour around the footings. However, the footings and rip-rap are unlikely to disrupt, alter or prevent normative fluvial processes or biological processes from occurring within this reach. Federally listed fish species may encounter the footings and rip-rap during higher flow events, however, the presence of the footings and rip-rap within this reach is not anticipated to have an adverse effect on federally listed salmonid species due to the availability of higher quality habitat nearby within this reach (in-stream and vegetative cover both up and downstream of the crossing location) and the relatively small area that the footings and rip-rap would occupy. The proposed action is not expected to have an effect on the Primary Constituent Elements for EFH including migration, spawning or rearing. Therefore, the proposed action would have no to minimal impacts to water bodies, floodplains or fish. The work as proposed is exempt from Corps Section 404 and DSL permit applications.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: NWI coverage maps indicated that no wetlands are present outside of the OHW line for the unnamed tributary. Work would be limited to outside the limits of OHW; therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed work is limited to placement of the bridge decking and footings, and placement of rock on the existing access road. There would be no impacts to groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: there would be no change in land use and no specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

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: 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:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Land ownership within the project limits is privately held. The Access Road Engineer will contact affected landowners prior to project 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/ John Wiley  
John Wiley EP-4  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: September 21, 2016