

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Chief Joseph-Monroe No. 1 Emergency Access Road Maintenance Project: Access Road to Chief Joseph-Monroe Structure 87/4 and Chief Joseph-Snohomish Structure 87/4

PP&A #: 3491

Project Manager: Todd Nicholson

Location: King County, Washington

Project activities would occur in Township 26N, Range 12E, Section 27, on United States Forest Service (USFS) lands.

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to make emergency repairs to about 1000 feet of access road that was damaged due to a November 2015 storm event. The storm and subsequent stream blowout caused the stream, a tributary of the Tye River, to reroute down the BPA access road, causing severe erosion to the road prism. The stream is continuing to downcut adjacent to Chief Joseph-Monroe Transmission Line Structure 87/4 and Chief Joseph-Snohomish Structure 87/4, and there is a high risk that another storm event of similar magnitude would jeopardize the transmission towers, with no way to access them.

The proposed project would permanently redirect the creek flow to its original channel by placing riprap and large coarse wood at the diversion point and re-establish access to these towers. The proposed work would take place in October and November 2016, with potential follow up actions in summer 2017. BPA's proposed emergency repair and restoration work would involve the following actions:

Stream redirect and restoration: A track excavator would be used to place riprap and coarse wood (logs and/or rootwads) in select locations; at the initial stream diversion point, and, if needed, in places along the original channel. Attempts would be made to salvage coarse wood from the area proposed for excavation. The original stream channel would be permanently reconnected and restored where it was diverted, with the channel width enlarged to accommodate the large seasonal flows demonstrated upstream. A small low-flow meander channel would be installed at the bottom of the enlarged channel. Other habitat mitigation or enhancement measures may be implemented as proposed by federal regulatory agencies (US Corps of Engineers, NOAA, and USFWS).

Road reconstruction: After the stream redirection, approximately 1500 cubic yards of cobbles, gravels, and sand accumulated from the creek blowout would be removed and salvaged, then placed within the gullied road prism. Approximately 500 cubic yards of clean fill material, would be imported to replace all the lost subgrade, surface aggregate, and native alluvium. Two water bars would be installed and oriented to deflect overland flows eastward away from the towers and toward the original stream channel during flood events. Other drainage features (ditches, water bars, cross-drain culverts, and/or drainage dips) would be reinstalled or added within the road prism, if needed

Gully stabilization: In order to reduce the energy of future flood flows, three riprap piles (totaling approximately 150 cubic yards) would be placed within the portion of the gullied channel not being reconstructed for use as an access road, as described above.

Tower Protection Measures: Approximately 100 cubic yards of recruitible light loose riprap (as defined by Washington State Department of Transportation) would be brought to each of the two BPA towers that are at risk of being damaged by future flood flows. The riprap would be placed in semi-circular rings around each tower, about 50 feet in diameter.

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/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason
Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 17, 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: Chief Joseph-Monroe No. 1 Emergency Access Road Maintenance Project

Project Site Description

The BPA access road is located in riparian forest habitat in the USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

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 <u>Explanation:</u> On July 22, The USFS initiated consultation, on behalf of BPA, with the Snoqualmie, Tulalip and Yakama Tribes. Comments were received from the Snoqualmie Tribe expressing interest in a survey of the area of the project area. The area was surveyed, by USFS staff on August 25, 2016, and No Historic Properties were discovered. The Snoqualmie Tribe indicated that, while they had concerns with the project area, they had no objections to the project going forward. The Washington State Historic Preservation Office (WA SHPO) would be notified of the finding of “No Historic Properties,” as per the stipulations of the 1997 Programmatic Agreement between the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, WA SHPO, and USFS Region 6.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Geology and Soils <u>Explanation:</u> The approximately 1500 cubic yards of sand and gravel that would be relocated from the creek blowout debris pile to the road would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. All imported road fill and aggregate would be sourced from USFS-approved sources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) <u>Explanation:</u> No federal or state special-status plant species are recorded in the project area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats) <u>Explanation:</u> No federal or state special-status wildlife species or habitat would be impacted by the proposed project.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs) <u>Explanation:</u> The access road to Structure 87/4 and the intermittent tributary to the Tye River are in proximity to fish-bearing waters. The Tye River has documented occurrences of anadromous salmonids and bull trout. The proposed work would be limited to an ephemeral tributary. If there is no flowing water at the time of construction, no in-water work will be necessary, but some construction-related sediment is expected to reach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

the Tye River, causing minimal short-term turbidity impacts.

On August 8, 2016 Informal consultation was initiated with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). Letters of concurrence for the proposed project were received from USFWS on September 2, 2016 and from NOAA Fisheries on August 29, 2016. If the stream is flowing, or expected to be flowing, at the time of construction, BPA would contact USFWS and NOAA Fisheries, and re-initiate consultation. On August 9, 2016, a Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) was submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers and Washington Department of Ecology seeking an emergency authorization. The emergency authorization is expected prior to the start of construction. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) was also notified of the proposed project on August 8, 2016, and responded on August 9, 2016, "WDFW has no further input at this time."

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: The proposed project would not impact wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The proposed work is not in proximity to drinking water sources, and is not anticipated to impact groundwater.

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

Explanation: The proposed project would not change land use and no specially designated areas were identified. A gate would be installed during the Summer 2017 work to limit unauthorized public access.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The proposed project would not change the visual quality of the area.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation would be temporary and negligible.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and localized. There are no residences in the project area.

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: BPA has been coordinating with the USFS Mt Baker-Snoqualmie, as the access road is on the forest. On September 30, 2016, the USFS concurred with BPA's findings and use of a Categorical Exclusion for the proposed work. BPA will implement all USFS-identified Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices listed in the September 30 letter.

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

Signed: /s/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn
Physical Scientist

Date: October 17, 2016