

Categorical Exclusion Determination
Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Indian Mountain Radio Site Access Road Maintenance and Helicopter Landing Zone Improvement

PP&A No.: 4821

Project Manager: Donna Martin – TELF-TPP-3

Location: Lake County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to improve approximately 4,000 linear feet of existing access road leading to the BPA Indian Mountain Radio Site. This would include grading and compacting existing road surface as well as hauling, placing, and shaping of additional crushed rock. Road maintenance would also include placement of 14 water bars.

General equipment used for this type of roadwork includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, and dump trucks. The access road improvements would preserve and repair the existing road, maintain roadway safety, and manage storm water run-off.

A 48-foot by 80-foot helicopter-landing zone would also be improved adjacent to the radio site. The zone would require some grading and minimal tree removal. All work would be completed in the fall.

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, Jul. 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/ Frederick Walasavage
Frederick Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange Date: June 28, 2022
Katey Grange
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: Indian Mountain Radio Site Access Road Maintenance and Helicopter Landing Zone Improvement

Project Site Description: The site is located on the Fremont – Winema National Forest at Indian Mountain where BPA has an active radio site. Nearby land uses include forest management and recreation. Vegetation consists of primarily rangeland and sparsely populated conifer trees. There is an existing access road to the radio towers at the top.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO), the Klamath Tribes, the United States Forest Service - Fremont-Winema NF (USFS), and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), on January 28, 2020. The CTWSRO responded on February 21, 2020 noting that the Area of Potential Effect (APE) was an area of concern to the tribe, and the Klamath Tribes responded on January 30, 2020 requesting a cultural survey be conducted. Oregon SHPO provided concurrence with the APE via a letter dated February 19, 2020. BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on April 20, 2022 and OR SHPO responded on April 28, 2022 assigning the project SHPO Case No. 20-0112. The Klamath responded on April 28, 2022 with several recommendations for how the project should proceed. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

The following measures would be taken:

- Access road work within a 30 meter buffer around site 35LK1530 would be limited to placement of gravel within the existing road prism, and compaction of that gravel. No grading, shaping, or other ground disturbing work would be undertaken in this buffered area.
- Trees that would be removed within a 30 meter buffer around site 35LK1530 and within the proposed helicopter landing zone would be cut off at or above the ground surface, and root wads would not be removed from the ground.
- Smaller vegetation that would be removed within a 30 meter buffer around site 35LK1530 and within the proposed helicopter landing zone would be cut off at or above the ground surface with root wads left in place.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during access road maintenance activities and landing zone improvement. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary to prevent soils from migrating off site.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plants are present. Project activities would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status species were identified within the project area. Project activities would temporarily disturb local wildlife during construction, but the disturbance would be limited and would not substantially alter the long-term footprint; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be affected in the long term.

Notes:

Even though no Forest sensitive species were specifically identified, the USFS has asked that the following best management practices be put in place:

- If a new bald eagle nesting or roosting area is found during project activities, activities shall be halted, and a wildlife biologist consulted before resuming activities. In case of a new nest or roost, a timing restriction would be put into place within 0.25 miles for visual and noise disturbing activities (January 15 - August 31).
- Restrict disturbance activities from within 0.25 miles of any known or newly discovered goshawk nests from March 1 - August 31. This condition may be waived if nesting or reproductive success surveys reveal goshawks are non-nesting or no young are present.
- Restrict disturbance activities within 300 yards of any discovered raptor nests from March 15 - August 15. This condition may be waived if nesting or reproductive success surveys reveal the species is non-nesting or no young are present.
- Restrict disturbance activities if denning wolves are discovered within one mile of the project area. The denning season for gray wolf is April 1 to July 15.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not result in permanent changes or impacts to land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within the existing access road and landing zone footprint and would be consistent with the existing view shed.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust and dust from utility and construction equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel 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 system 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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty notified the Fremont – Winema National Forest and have been in constant communication. A land use permit, dated 10-16-21, was issued by the USFS.

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

Signed: /s/ Frederick Walasavage

Date: June 28, 2022

Frederick Walasavage
Environmental Protection Specialist