

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Highway 30 Wildlife Underpass Project

Project No.: 2010-004-00

Project Manager: Anne Creason, EWL - 4

Location: Multnomah County, OR

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST) to implement a wildlife habitat restoration project on state-owned land in Multnomah County, Oregon.

CREST proposes to construct a wildlife corridor under U.S. Highway 30 to promote the safe movement and migration of amphibian species. U.S. Highway 30 bisects a wildlife migration corridor between the Tualatin Hills and the Burlington Bottoms floodplain along Multnomah Channel. Amphibian species including Northern red-legged frogs and Pacific chorus frogs migrate back and forth between the upland forests of the Tualatin Hills and the floodplain wetlands along Multnomah Channel throughout the year. The 4-lane highway greatly impacts migration patterns, killing many of these amphibians as they traverse back and forth. This project would seek to address this problem by installing a 54-inch-diameter steel casing culvert underneath the existing roadway. The culvert would be hydraulically driven through the existing highway embankment. Eight vertical light boxes would be installed to bring in light and moisture to the culvert. In an effort to direct amphibians to the new underpass, approximately 430 feet of low concrete wall (4 feet in height) would be installed at the eastern entrance of the culvert, and 165 feet of concrete wall would be installed at the western entrance of the culvert. Grading would occur at the western entrance to the culvert to direct surface water runoff from the new culvert entrance. The new culvert, light boxes, directional walls, and grading at the western entrance of the culvert would all be completed in existing highway fill. An access road located east of Highway 30 is the only project element not located on existing highway fill.

Funding the proposed activities supports ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the FCRPS on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 et seq.).

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/ Shawn Skinner
Shawn Skinner
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Katey C. Grange</u>	<u>August 5, 2022</u>
Katey C. Grange	Date
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: Highway 30 Wildlife Underpass Project

Project Site Description

The project is located at the western extent of the J.R. Palensky Wildlife Area near Burlington, Oregon. The proposed wildlife crossing would pass beneath U.S. Highway 30, a four-lane highway, near milepost 12.2, south of NW Burlington Drive. The crossing would connect the J.R. Palensky Wildlife Area with the upstream drainage basin to the southwest. On the northeast side of U.S. 30 is a guardrail and on the southwest side of the highway is a concrete drainage curb. Adjacent to the drainage curb is an approximately 25-foot-wide flat grassy area bordered by deciduous trees of varying size.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA made a determination of no historic properties affected on June 22, 2022 (OR 2022 043). BPA consulted with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, the Oregon Department of Transportation, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. Concurrence was received from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (August 2, 2022). BPA did not receive concurrence from any of the other consulting parties within 30 days.

Notes:

- In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped immediately and a BPA Archaeologist and Historian would be notified, as well as consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would have limited effect on geology and soils. Impact to soils would be limited to the existing imported highway fill. Native soils would remain undisturbed. Erosion control BMPs and follow up plantings would be used to minimize on site erosion.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plant species are known to be present. Approximately 25 deciduous trees (alder) would be removed on the west side of the highway to construct the light boxes and the directional walls. All of these trees are less than 24" dbh, with most ranging 10-16 inches dbh. All disturbed areas would be seeded and replanted.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would have no effects to Federal/state special-status wildlife species. Columbian white-tailed deer (CWTD) are known to occupy areas nearby at the Scappoose Industrial Airpark to the north and Sauvie Island to the northwest. The proposed actions would occur outside of the CWTD fawning period, within the existing imported highway fill, and would have no effect to CWTD or their habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not involve any in-water work or impact to water bodies, floodplain or fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not affect groundwater or aquifers. All digging involved would be within the existing imported highway fill.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is designed to minimize lane closures to the maximum extent possible. Opting to directionally drive the steel casing through the highway berm instead of an open cut allows traffic to remain relatively uninterrupted. However, there would be some closures for installation of the light boxes, and some shoulder or median closures to address some of the existing utilities. These closures would likely be phased, and would occur in periods of 1-2 weeks. Land use would return to normal upon completion of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No visually-prominent vegetative, landform, or structural changes would be made. Lightboxes would be installed at ground level and entrance to culvert would be constructed to attract amphibians/wildlife into the underpass.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any increase in emissions from vehicles accessing the project site would be very minor and short term.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary, intermittent noise from construction activities would occur but would be similar to the existing highway noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety regulations would be followed during work activities.

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: The project would occur on land owned by Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), who is a project partner. All work would occur in coordination with ODOT.

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

Signed: /s/ Shawn Skinner August 5, 2022
Shawn Skinner, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist