

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lane-Wendson No. 2 Structures 21/3 to 22/3 Line Repair Project

PP&A No.: 4993

Project Manager: Michael Beyer - TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Lane County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance, B3.2 Aviation Activities, and B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to construct two landings on existing access roads to rebuild the top half of structure 22/2 on the Lane-Wendson No. 2 transmission line. The structure was damaged during a winter storm in January 2024. BPA owns and operates the Lane-Wendson No. 2 transmission line located in Lane, County Oregon, where the work is to be performed. Additionally, there would be replacement of fiber from 21/3 to 22/3, using a drone that would string the line from 22/3 down to 21/3. Access road work would consist of adding more rock to the existing access to each structure on the easement. The landing work would require some blading, shaping, and additional rock. Landing work at 22/2 would also require a temporary landing pad structure overlapping with the access road that would increase the safety of personnel and equipment. The temporary landing structure would be constructed of ecoblocks and a gravel pad and would be removed after construction.

These actions would occur on existing access roads and landings on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-managed land and private property for which BPA has an easement. Access roads would possess a well-defined and established prism and travel surface that includes a rock base and surface. Equipment would include an excavator, roller, and dump trucks, as well as electrical bucket truck and light duty trucks. If needed, erosion control measures and revegetation would occur along access roads and adjacent to landings. The work would occur in spring of 2024.

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/ Steven Selser

Steven Selser

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 11, 2024

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.

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Project Site Description

The project is located in the Coast Range, west of Walton, Oregon. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated the coast range ecoregion as a Level III ecoregion. Mainly the surrounding area consists of late-successional forest with steep terrain. The Lane-Wendson No. 2 high voltage transmission corridor is the central component of the project area, situated in an easement managed by the BLM for forestry products and privately held timber land. The cleared corridor is approximately 100 ft. in width. Vegetation in the corridor is routinely managed to promote low-growing vegetation and cut any tall-growing trees that could encroach on the energized conductor. Vegetation in the corridor includes sword fern, Oregon grape, native grasses, and Himalayan blackberry.

The transmission line also spans a ravine with taller evergreen and deciduous trees. At the bottom of the ravine is Kirk Creek.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with a Determination of no historic properties affected, with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians on March 1, 2024. No responses were received within 30 days.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Access road and landing improvements would involve blading and shaping, followed by placement of rock and compaction of the footprint. Disturbed, un-rocked soils would be stabilized with hydromulch, native seed, and erosion control blankets. As necessary, erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented, such as straw mulch and wattles. Restoration efforts would be inspected prior to demobilization, and monitored to ensure final stabilization goals are met.

Notes:

- Use erosion control best management practices.
- Revegetate disturbed soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Impacts to vegetation would be limited to the immediate work area near the access road and landings. Those unrocked, disturbed areas would be hydroseeded with a native, erosion control seed mix, stabilized, and monitored to ensure revegetation.

No documented Endangered Species Act (ESA) or State of Oregon special-status species or habitats are present in the project area.

Notes:

- Disturbed, unrocked areas would be seeded with a native seed mix and temporarily stabilized with hydromulch and erosion control blankets, and monitored to ensure final stabilization goals are achieved.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would be limited to within the existing landings, road surface and immediately adjacent drainage ditches. A species list for the project location was acquired from USFWS on 15 February, 2024 and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's sensitive species list was reviewed. No Threatened or Endangered, or special status wildlife species or habitat would be affected by the actions. Temporary wildlife disturbance from noise would occur during maintenance activities.

No documented State of Oregon special-status species or habitats are present in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Kirk Creek is within the line corridor, however no in-water work would occur. The purpose of the work would be to conduct road and landing maintenance that would prevent erosion and soil loss into waterways. Erosion control BMPs would be implemented to prevent sedimentation.

Notes:

- Erosion and sediment control best management practices would be utilized during construction. All disturbed soils would be stabilized and reseeded upon project completion.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: No work would occur within wetlands. The purpose of the work would be to conduct road and landing maintenance that would prevent erosion and soil loss into wetlands. Erosion control BMPs would be implemented to prevent sedimentation impacts to nearby wetlands.

Notes:

- Erosion and sediment control best management practices would be utilized during construction. All disturbed soils would be stabilized and reseeded upon project completion.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur at depths that would intersect groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in the visual character of the access roads and landings would occur. The structure would have the same visual characteristics as the work would repair the structure to the original state.

Notes:

- Upon project completion, disturbed soils would be reseeded with a native erosion control seed mix and monitored for revegetation.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with increased vehicle traffic would occur during road work activity.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have limited, temporary impacts to noise related to heavy equipment operations. However, construction activity would occur during daylight hours, when potential impacts to people and wildlife would be minimized, and the project is located in a fairly remote area.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A safe, reliable high voltage transmission system is a human health and safety issue. The project would repair the top half of structure 22/2 on the Lane-Wendson No. 2 transmission line that was damaged by weather in January 2024. Maintenance activity would improve safety of access roads.

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 transmission line maintenance foreman, access road engineers, environmental representatives, and realty representatives have discussed proposed project activities with the private landowner and BLM, and would continue to coordinate activities with the landowner and land manager through construction and into post-construction revegetation monitoring.

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

Signed: /s/ Steven Selser

Steve Selser

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 11, 2024