

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: American Forest Management Access Road Request

Project No.: LURR 20240144, LURR 20240145, LURR 20240155

Project Manager: Ryan Tanner TERR-3

Location: Klickitat County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow American Forestry Management (AFM) use of BPA's fee-owned rights-of-way and access roads to access their adjacent property located in Klickitat County, WA. The proposed access road request would be along the North Bonneville No. 1 transmission line along structures 41/1 and 42/3 and Knight Ostrander No. 1 transmission line along structures 19/3 and 20/6.

AFM proposes to use existing access roads within BPA's fee-owned rights-of-way located off Klickitat Appleton Road and Fisher Hill Road in Klickitat County, WA. AFM requests the use of BPA's rights-of-way to access established spur roads that branch off of BPA's rights-of-way access road for the purpose of timber harvesting in Lupine Forest, LLC property located adjacent to BPA's rights-of-way. Minimal ground disturbance is proposed potentially including minor grading of spur roads to ensure an even-ground surface and smooth transition onto BPA's adjoining access roads.

Construction and logging equipment using the roads would include tracked skidders, rubber-tired skidders, shovels, graders, and light duty trucks. All BPA rights-of-way and access roads would be restored to pre-logging conditions which may or may not be limited to, re-rocking, grading, and water bars.

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.

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. 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.

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Project Site Description

The actions would be located in Klickitat County, WA. All work would be done in existing and managed BPA rights-of-way and on private timber and forested land. Areas of access would be WA Township 4 North, Ranges 12E and 13E, and Sections 19, 20, 25, and 30. The proposed sites has previous ground disturbance and is located in areas that are graveled and have compacted soils. Surrounding area consists primarily of private timber land holdings, small and large residential properties, and some agricultural lands.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA conducted an archeological and cultural survey of the proposed work area and concluded there would be no ground-disturbing activities from the proposed access road work that would affect cultural or historic resources. BPA historian and cultural review has shown that the proposed project would have no potential to cause effect to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The access road and spur road use would occur on an existing road prism. New construction would involve removing a potential vegetated layer of the existing spur road prism located within BPA's rights-of-way. Upon completion of project activities, any disturbed access roads would be stabilized with road surface material (rock) and erosion control measures (water bars) to be restored to pre-project like and kind conditions. Storm water BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line rights-of-way corridor; minimal vegetation may be removed or crushed at adjoining spur road sites. Some common native and non-native plants at the spur road locations may be temporarily impacted. No special-status plants or Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plants would be impacted from project activities. No ESA-listed plant species are present in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any local wildlife in the immediate work area would be temporarily disturbed by noise and increased human presence at varying times during access road work. Due to the lack of suitable habitat and limited wildlife use in the area, no large impacts are projected within the project area. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor and access roads with little wildlife habitat. The project locations are not within or near any designated critical habitats or known occupied sites for listed species. Due to the lack suitable habitat and no known presence in the project areas, BPA has determined that the projects would have “no effect” on ESA listed species or their critical habitat. No other special-status wildlife would be impacted by project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project does not include any in-water work or ground disturbance near waterways. All disturbed areas would be protected from runoff by use of appropriate BMPs during the project and stabilized upon completion of project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project location is not within or near any wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. All spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project locations are confined to the existing transmission line rights-of-way corridor and would be consistent with that land use. Surrounding land use is private agricultural and timber. Project locations do not include any special designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions at existing infrastructure would not alter or effect visual quality. Any access road improvements are similar to existing access roads and would not be visibly different from the existing road prisms.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The projects are of a short duration and would involve normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is located away from any residential areas on agricultural and forested land. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is considered normal construction and maintenance.

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 rights-of-way use request is located on BPA fee-owned property, and BPA would notify any other easement holders on the BPA property, if required. American Forest Management and Lupine Forest LLC would be responsible for any adjacent landowner notification, involvement, or coordination, if required.

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

Signed:

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist