

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sirios Bridge Installation

PP&A No.: 5044

Project Manager: Helen Oppenheimer – TELF-TPP-3

Location: King County, Washington

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 provide funds to Sirios Timber Partners to replace a failing culvert with a bridge on a shared access road. The access road provides access to the Echo Lake-Maple Valley and Rocky Reach-Maple Valley transmission lines. The stream channel bed width is approximately 4.5 feet wide. The existing stream culvert would be removed and a 35-foot-long bridge would be installed to completely span the ordinary high water mark. Approximately 30 to 40 feet of streambed would be regraded underneath where the existing culvert would be removed. Appropriate streambed material for the area would also be added to the streambed, assuming none is present beneath the existing culvert. All work would take place during the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife in water work window or when the stream is dry. If water is present at the time of construction, fish salvage and dewatering would occur in accordance with the requirements of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

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/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer Date: July 29, 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 area is located approximately 30 miles northeast of Covington, Washington just off of Highway 18. The project location is owned by private timber companies and is surrounded by a mix of recently harvested areas as well as replanted commercial timber. An unnamed, intermittent waterbody flows through the existing culvert, which is in poor condition and failing. The riparian area immediately surrounding the stream and existing culvert is in good condition and consists of mature, coniferous timber that is primarily Douglas fir trees. The waterbody is also in good condition with only a 7.5% slope.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) on June 26, 2024. It was determined that the implementation of the proposed project would result in no historic properties affected. The Snoqualmie Tribe concurred on July 26, DAHP concurred on July 27, and no other comments were received.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during the removal of the old culvert and the installation of the new bridge. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary to reduce the potential for soils to leave the work area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road prism and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state or federally listed sensitive species. The project is greater than 4 miles from the nearest marbled murrelet or northern spotted owl historical detection. The project would not remove trees or include the use of a helicopter.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All of the work would be conducted during the WDFW in water work window. Fish salvage and dewatering would occur if the stream is not dry at the time of construction. Fish species that may be present in the waterbody could include trout and sculpin and possibly steelhead, although the stream is not classified as an anadromous fish stream. Improving the crossing would decrease velocity during high flows, reducing erosion and also allowing for upstream fish migration. The proposed project meets the design criteria and is covered under the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The proposed project has also been consulted with and meets the design criteria of Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA).

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are documented within the project area. No impacts to wetlands are anticipated.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur. No specially-designated or recreational areas are present in the work areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within the existing access road prism. While the crossing would change from a culvert to a bridge, both road surfaces would be gravel, so minimal changes to visual quality are anticipated.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power 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 has been actively coordinating the cost share with the landowner who initiated the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnell Deacon

Jonnell Deacon
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: July 29, 2024