

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: United States Forest Service Use of Bonneville Power Administration's Transportation System Road

Project No.: LURR 20210138

Project Manager: Lesa Gilmore, TERR-3

Location: Klickitat County, Washington

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 the United States Forest Service (USFS), Mt Adams Ranger District, to use approximately 3,500 linear feet of BPA's transportation system road along BPA's fee-owned corridor. The USFS is requesting road use to access and accomplish their Major Creek Legacy Pines forest restoration project.

The section of road requested is located between North Bonneville-Midway structure 33/1 and 34/2. The BPA Road Identification Numbers include: NBON-MIDW-1-033-01-0, NBON-MIDW-1-033-02-0, NBON-MIDW-1-033-03-, NBON-MIDW-1-033-04-0, and NBON-MIDW-1-033-03-1.

BPA would allow USFS to use the specified section of road for year-round access from July 16th, 2021 to February 28th, 2025. However, use would be limited during the wet season to light-duty vehicles, to avoid rutting of the access road. All USFS vehicles and equipment would stay within the existing access road prism. No ground disturbing activities or road improvements would be allowed. Additionally, and only if impeding access, would mowing or brushing the existing access road or moving fallen trees off roadway be allowed.

Proposed USFS equipment to be utilizing the road includes: mid-sized excavator and skidder or small dozer for log transport, self-loading logging truck, pick-up trucks, and all-terrain vehicles.

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/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

April 27, 2021

date

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 requested road use would be within the North Bonneville-Midway transmission line corridor on BPA fee-owned land in Klickitat County, Washington. The project is located in Township 03N, Range 11E, and Section 2. The corridor consists of low-growing vegetation surrounded predominantly by second growth forest. No water resources occur within the specified area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA archaeologist reviewed the proposed activities. Through background research for the Area of Potential Effects (APE), it was found that the western portion of the APE had previously been surveyed (Dryden 2007). No cultural resources were identified in this location as part of that survey. The APE has been modified through construction of the current access road and clearing for the BPA transmission lines ROW corridor.

The proposed project (action) is an undertaking, but no historic properties would be affected.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to geology or soils are anticipated from use of the road.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no listed or special-status species present. No impacts to plants are anticipated from use of the road.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no listed or special-status species present. Use of the road is expected to occur during daytime hours with some transient increases in noise for locally occurring species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish within the general vicinity of the road. Road use would not impact these resources.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the general vicinity of the road. Road use would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Road use would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in the general land use or specially-designated areas as a result of road use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change to visual quality as a result of road use.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur temporarily during road use.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Transient increases in noise may occur during daylight hours as a result of road use.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated to result from this project.

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 is in coordination with the USFS applicant.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts April 27, 2021
Laura Roberts, ECT-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist