

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Cardwell Substation Emergency Truck Ramp

PP&A No.: 4481

LURR No.: 20200056

Project Manager: Charlene Belt – TERR-Ross-MHQA

Location: Cowlitz County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.32 - Traffic flow adjustments, B2.5 - Facility safety and environmental improvements

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to enter into a land use agreement (LURR) with Harold Sorensen Trucking (HST) to construct an emergency truck ramp on BPA fee-owned property in Cowlitz County, Washington. HST is seeking permission to build the emergency truck ramp from its own rock pit access road onto BPA fee-owned property. The HST access road has a steep decline followed by a sharp turn coming down and out from their gravel pit. The location has been the site of several accidents due to failing equipment (truck brakes). The project would include removing 3-4 trees and leveling a berm between the properties to create the emergency truck ramp. Sand and drain rock would be placed on top of the area, approximately 120-feet long by 22-feet wide.

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/ Anthony Gibson

Anthony Gibson
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel Date: February 15, 2023
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: Cardwell Substation Emergency Truck Ramp

Project Site Description

The project involves an approximately 120-foot by 22-foot piece of land on BPA fee-owned property at the northeast corner of the Cardwell Substation in Kalama, Washington. The area is an open flat field with grass and forbs.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe on February 14, 2020. DAHP responded on February 18, 2020, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe responded on February 19 and February 21, 2020.

BPA conducted background research for the area of potential effects (APE), and followed up with a field survey of the APE. Background research conducted by BPA indicated that nine cultural resource surveys had been previously conducted within one mile of the APE, one of which was conducted within the APE. Additionally, four previously identified cultural resources were noted to be within one mile of the APE; however, none were identified in the APE. As a result of the cultural resource survey and subsurface testing conducted by BPA, no cultural resources were identified in the APE. Therefore, as per §36 CFR 800.4(d)(1), BPA has determined that the implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected.

In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by the appropriate consulting parties. DAHP and the appropriate Tribes would be notified of any future findings.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal ground disturbance is anticipated. Native soil would be used as backfill if needed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. Vegetation may be crushed where construction equipment would be working. ESA-listed plant species are not known to occur within 0.5 miles of the project area. Furthermore, the project area does not provide the habitat required for any ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or other sensitive species are anticipated.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have minimal impacts to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated noise and human presence. There would be no impacts to ESA-listed wildlife species. No impacts to state-listed and other sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities in any river, stream, or other waterbody along the project and no riparian vegetation would be impacted. The project would have no effect to ESA-listed species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities in wetlands within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater is proposed. Minimal ground disturbance below natural surface is anticipated.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Currently an open field. No significant change in land use would occur. The proposed project would be for emergencies and not intended for everyday use. There are no specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a minimal impact to visual quality. All work would be performed within existing BPA fee-owned property next to the Cardwell Substation which is currently an open field.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicular and equipment emissions as well as dust may occur temporarily during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary noise from construction activities would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise from the adjacent property and Cardwell Substation would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

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: All activities have been requested by and coordinated with the landowner.

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

Signed: /s/ Anthony Gibson Date: February 15, 2023

Anthony Gibson – EPR -4
Physical Scientist (Environment)