

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Chehalis-Raymond No. 1 2023 Access Road Improvements Project, Phase 1

PP&A No.: 4896

Project Manager: Donna Martin - TELF-TPP-3

Location: Pacific County, WA

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) is proposing to repair and install new sections of access road between structures 26/6 and 27/7 of the Chehalis-Raymond No.1 115 kV transmission line. The work would include repairing approximately 11,400 linear feet (about 2.2 miles) of existing access road and constructing approximately 500 linear feet (about 0.1 mile) of new access road. Work includes placement of approximately 6,200 tons of aggregate, installation of 11 new rolling drain dips, installation of 3 cross-drain culverts, and restoring drainage ditches. Additionally five existing landings would be repaired. Landing dimensions are: at 26/6 is 60 feet by 30 feet (1800 sq. feet.), at 26/7 is 80 feet by 40 feet (3200 sq. feet.), at 26/8 is 60 feet by 40 feet (2400 sq. feet.), and two landings at 26/9, 100 feet by 45 feet and 4 feet by 20 feet (5300 sq. feet. total).

The project also include repairs to a recently installed culvert and access road in the access to structure 44/13. The repair includes removing unstable and sloughing material at the culverts inlet and adding rock armoring to stabilize the area. The road bed over the culvert would be repaired using standard spec materials.

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/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts, EPR-Olympia
Physical Scientist - Environmental

Concur:

/s/ Sarah Biegel

Sarah Biegel Date: April 24, 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.

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Project Site Descriptions

The project would be at a specific locations in Pacific County WA in BPA's Olympia Maintenance District. All work would be done in existing managed rights-of-way and access easements located on private agricultural and forested land. Project work areas would not be located on public lands. Site specific locations and details are listed in the following table.

Transmission Line	Structure(s)	Township	Range	Section	Land Use
Chehalis-Raymond No. 1	26/6 to 27/8	12N	6W	6	Private Ag/Forest
Chehalis-Raymond No. 1	44/13	14N	8W	18	Private Ag/Forest

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On February 20, 2022, BPA engaged in consultation with the Shoalwater Bay Tribe, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WA State Parks), and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for the project locations. The project areas were surveyed by a BPA archaeologist. On November 3, 2022, consultation including letters, which determined that no historic properties would be affected by project activities were sent to the Shoalwater Bay Tribe, WA State Parks, and DAHP. The DAHP concurred with the final determination on November 4, 2022. No additional responses were received. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological resource staff would be contacted.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The access road reconstruction work would occur on an existing road prism. New construction would involve removing the vegetated layer of the new road prism or around the transmission structure (for the landings). Material would be spoiled onsite in an appropriate area and stabilized with seed and mulch. Upon completion of project activities, any disturbed sites would be stabilized with road surface material (rock) or native seed mix and erosion control materials. Storm water BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues. Upon completion of project activities, any disturbed sites would be stabilized with native seed mix, or erosion control materials.

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 corridor; minimal vegetation may be removed or crushed at the pole location sites. Some common native and non-native plants at the structure locations may be temporarily impacted. With the exception of the 500 feet of new road and the two landings where vegetation would be covered with rock, vegetation disturbance would be superficial and these plants would be expected to recover naturally through propagation and via the existing seed bank in the area. Disturbed sites would be restored with native seed mix.

No special-status plants or Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plants would be impacted from project activities. BPA obtained an official species list from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on June 7th, 2022. 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 wildlife in the immediate work area would be temporarily disturbed by noise and increased human presence at varying times throughout the summer. BPA obtained an official species list for the project location in Pacific County, Washington from the USFWS on March 9th, 2023. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor and access roads with little wildlife habitat. The road reconstruction and construction work would be confined to the existing right-of-way and access road easements. 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: Two creeks listed as habitat for anadromous fish species are located in or near the project area and are considered EFH for Coho salmon. Custer Creek runs within 40 feet of the road improvements for approximately 460 feet. Fern Creek runs within 450 feet of the access road improvements at its closest location. 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 right-of-way corridor and access road easements 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. Access road improvement and new construction are similar to existing access roads and would not be visibly different from the existing structures.

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 property owners have been involved throughout the project planning process. Notification via mailed letter has been sent to the current landowner. The letters provide contact information for BPA to allow feedback from landowners/managers concerning the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Greg Tippetts
Greg Tippetts, EPR-Olympia
Physical Scientist, Environmental

Date: April 24, 2023