

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Rogue Substation Communications Site - Beam Path Maintenance

**PP&A No.:** 4812

**Project Manager:** Micaiah Watkins

**Location:** Curry County, Oregon

**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 remove approximately 337 trees that are currently either blocking, or at risk of blocking, the microwave beam path between Rogue Substation and Cape Blanco Communications Site. The trees would be cut by conventional methods. Once on the ground, trees would be skidded to one of two temporary log decks on BPA property. All trees would be donated to local organizations. The remaining debris would be chipped or lopped into small pieces and spread on-site.

**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/ Oden Jahn*

Oden Jahn

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer Date: February 20, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Rogue Substation Communications Site - Beam Path Maintenance

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located at Rogue Substation, approximately 5 miles north of Gold Beach, Oregon. The beam path in the project area crosses BPA property that is relatively flat and populated with a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Mechanical equipment operations, including lifting and transporting logs, dragging, or winching trees, have the potential to disturb surface soils within the proposed clearing area. An archaeological site was previously reported on the adjacent county-owned parcel. No archaeological resources have been identified within the proposed project area; however, previously unidentified archaeological resources may be exposed during the proposed tree falling and log removal work.

Notes: The BPA Cultural Resources Program has determined that a cultural monitor should be present to inspect surface disturbance areas during mechanical equipment operations during the project.

- BPA has developed an Inadvertent Discovery Plan for this project that establishes protocols for identifying and protecting archaeological resources during the project.
- A cultural resource monitor would be present to observe mechanical equipment operations involved in tree cutting and log removal in the vicinity of the previously reported archaeological site (located approximately between trees surveyed with numbers 160 through 250) within the project area.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Dragging or winching trees has the potential to disturb surface soils in the area near the communications site.

Notes: The BPA Forestry Department would be responsible for implementing the following conservation measures during this project:

- Operations would be designed and implemented to minimize compaction, displacement, or erosion.
- Previously disturbed areas and existing openings would be used where practicable to establish landing sites.
- Mounds, berms, and ruts would be smoothed to the original contour.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: There are no known Federal/state special-status plants in the project area.

Notes: The BPA Forestry Department would be responsible for implementing the following conservation measures during this project:

- Machines, vehicles, and other equipment must be cleaned prior to working within the project area.
- Minimize soil disturbance as much as possible.
- Do not spread weeds or other unwanted vegetation.

### **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 are no known Federal/state special-status wildlife species in the project area. Other wildlife species that may be in the area at the time of project activities may be temporarily disturbed or disrupted; however, suitable habitat is not limited in the project area and temporarily displaced wildlife would not be precluded from moving to, and sheltering in, adjacent areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no waterbodies, floodplains, Federal/state special-status aquatic species, or habitat in the project area.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the project area.

### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project does not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers.

### **8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no specially-designated areas in the vicinity of the project area.

### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no significant impact on visual quality.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no significant impact on air quality.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project is not located in the vicinity of any residential properties. Noise impacts would be temporary and occur only during daylight hours.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Forestry activities carry the risk of starting wildfires.

Notes: The BPA Forestry Department would be responsible for implementing the following conservation measures during this project:

- Operators would be required to follow local Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL).

### **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 project would occur on BPA fee-owned property. No other landowners would be affected.

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

Signed: Oden Jahn

Oden Jahn

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: February 20, 2024