

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: DeWitt Homestead Roof Replacement

Project No.: 2007-397-00

Project Manager: Allan Whiting – EWL-4

Location: Grant County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWS) to replace the aging roof of the DeWitt Homestead. The DeWitt Homestead is in the Oxbow Conservation Area, land owned in fee-title by the CTWS. Roof replacement would meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (36 CFR Part 68, 1995) and would be completed by professionals who meet the appropriate Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards.

The project does not involve any ground excavation.

These actions would support one of the stipulations in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among BPA, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and invited signatories, including the DeWitt Museum, the Malheur National Forest, and the CTWS regarding the Dunstan and Camp Creek Restoration projects in Grant County, Oregon. These projects would adversely affect the Oregon Lumber Company Railroad, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under the name of Sumpter Valley Railway, Middle Fork (John Day River) Spur (SHPO Case No. 19-0256).

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.

Israel Duran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel
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 Description

The project is in the Oxbow Conservation Area in the upper John Day River Basin in Grant County, Oregon. Oxbow Conservation Area is 1,022 acres owned by the CTWS and is surrounded by the Malheur National Forest. The property includes about four miles of the Middle Fork John Day River and six cold-water perennial tributaries and was originally several homesteads pre-dating the 1890s, eventually known as the DeWitt Ranch. The area still contains some of the original structures, including the DeWitt Homestead, and is accessible to the public using established roads in the area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No or No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA identified an area of potential effects and initiated consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the CTWS starting February 5, 2018, on the Dunstan Floodplain Project. BPA consulted on a determination of adverse effect to the National Register listed railway on February 14, 2020, and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to mitigate those adverse effects was executed on June 16, 2020. On January 8, 2024, BPA completed consultation with the SHPO under Section 106 for the replacement of the DeWitt roof as mitigation for the adverse affects caused by the Dunstan Floodplain Project on the historic Sumpter Valler railroad line as per the MOA.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur; there would be no impacts to soils and geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur and no plants would be disturbed. Activities would occur within existing developed areas that are not vegetated. No ESA-listed or state special-status plant species would be present within the project sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed species, including the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), and the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*; Candidate species)

have the potential to be in the project area. However, there are no known occurrences of these species or designated critical habitats in the project area. The proposed activity would occur in an already developed area near a road. Noise from construction and vehicles may cause wildlife to avoid the area. These impacts would be temporary and have no long-term effects as it would be expected that wildlife would return once construction was complete.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-river/channel work would occur with the proposed activity. There would be no impact on water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur within an existing developed area where no wetlands are present, so there would be no impact to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater are proposed. The proposed project would have no impact to groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The underlying land use would not change. Access to the DeWitt Homestead by the public may be temporarily restricted during the project for safety reasons.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in the visual character of the existing structure would occur. The work would be completed according to standards for historic properties to repair the roof but retain the building's historic character.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There may be minor and temporary amounts of exhaust produced by vehicles during construction. The emissions would be of short duration and consistent in amount and duration with vehicle use along the nearby roadway. There would be no long-term effects to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise is anticipated during construction. The noise would be of short duration during daylight hours, temporary, and cause no long-term impacts.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and safety during construction. No impacts to human health and safety are expected due to project activities.

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 location is owned by CTWS. BPA, Oregon SHPO, DeWitt Museum, Malheur National Forest, and CTWS have coordinated project activities and identified BPA as the lead Federal agency as documented in the MOA.

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

Signed:

Israel Duran
Environmental Protection Specialist