

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Urgent Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2 Access Road Swawilla Fire Repair and Maintenance

Project No.: P06047

Project Manager: Donna Martin – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Ferry and Okanogan Counties, 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) proposes to repair or improve approximately 11.8 miles of access roads, construct approximately 0.2 mile of access road spurs and construct 37 landings within the 8 to 12 mile from structures 8/4 to 12/9, 13 mile, and 18 to 20 mile along the Keller Tap-Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2 transmission line located on the Colville Reservation (see Table 1 for locations). Proposed road work would include blading, shaping, grading, and placing surface rock on new and existing road prisms to ensure safe access to structures.

In addition, the proposed work would include the installation of 7 new cross-drain culverts, replacement of 3 damaged cross-drain culverts, and other drainage features such as ditches, water bars, and drain dips. General equipment used for this type of road maintenance includes graders, rollers, bull-dozer, excavators, and dump trucks.

Along the approximately 11.8-mile-long project area, no staging areas have been identified.

Transmission Line	TRS	County, State	Ownership
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R31E SEC26	Okanogan, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R31E SEC25	Okanogan, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R32E SEC30	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R32E SEC19	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R32E SEC20	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R32E SEC17	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R32E SEC16	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T29N R32E SEC15	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T30N R32E SEC25	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T30N R33E SEC30	Ferry, WA	Tribal
Keller Tap – Grand Coulee Okanogan No. 2	T30N R33E SEC29	Ferry, WA	Tribal

Table 1: project work areas

The proposed action would maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer Date: October 24, 2024

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist

Post Review Discovery Procedure

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 area is located in northeastern Washington and consists of predominantly second growth western larch and ponderosa pine forest located to the west of the Sanpoil River on the Colville Reservation. Because of the steepness of the terrain, drainages along the project are mostly ephemeral.

Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line rights-of-way, on land managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation Tribal Historic Preservation Office on October 1, 2024. The CTCR THPO responded on October 9, 2024, that the project as described would have no adverse effect to historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soils would be disturbed primarily for the installation of new access road spurs and landings. Minimal ground disturbance outside of these areas is anticipated. Predominantly, ground disturbing activities would occur on existing access roads and subsequently rocked. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Vegetation would be disturbed for the installation of the new project components and minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated were existing roads would be repaired and improved. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state sensitive plant species are anticipated.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any federal or state special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access roads and would not substantially alter the footprint; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would be minimally affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is not located within a floodplain and there are no nearby water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish. Erosion control best management practices would be used to ensure sedimentation into any water body does not occur.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed, and excavation would not extend to a depth that would intersect groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially-designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a minimal impact to visual quality. The proposed work is predominantly on existing access roads and would be visually consistent with the existing transmission line corridor.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power to the region.

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 personnel and archaeologist have coordinated the proposed project activities with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities have been addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: October 24, 2024