Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Flood Control Detention Structure Modifications on Lexington-Longview No. 1

Project No.: LURR 20250204

Project Manager: Billie Woodman, TERR-ROSS MHQA

Location: Cowlitz County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Lexington Flood Control Zone District of Cowlitz County to raise the crest height of the South Fork McCorkle Creek Detention Structure and construct a new spillway and outlet piping within the Lexington-Longview No. 1 transmission line right-of-way (ROW). The project is needed to improve flood protection for downstream residential areas and infrastructure.

The height of the detention structure would be raised by adding fill on the northeast side of the existing embankment to raise the elevation by 15 feet. The highest portion of the detention structure would be approximately 75 feet northeast of the existing crest and outside of the BPA ROW. Approximately 55 feet of the project would be located within BPA ROW. Total fill areas within the BPA ROW would be about 92,800 square feet (2.1 acres) for the detention structure.

Also on BPA ROW, the existing spillway would be filled to the height of the modified, taller detention structure and a new concrete spillway and gate structure would be constructed northwest of the existing spillway. The new spillway and gate structure would cover approximately 2,600 square feet. The new intake structure and piping would require excavation and some fill within existing wetlands to create a new stream channel to the pipe inlet.

An access road running perpendicular to the detention structure would be raised approximately 6 to 7 feet under the conductors of the Lexington-Longview No. 1 transmission line.

BPA authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.102 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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures* (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. [1]

JEREMY DOSCHKA

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Jeremy Doschka
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

KATEY GRANGE

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Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

[1] BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to the interim final rule to revise DOE NEPA regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 and NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation

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: Flood Control Detention Structure Modifications on Lexington-Longview No. 1

Project Site Description

The proposed action is located near the community of Lexington, Cowlitz County, Washington in Section 10 and 15, Township 8 North, Range 2 West. The project area mainly consists of the existing detention structure and spillway with recently imported fill material designed to compress soils prior to constructing the modified detention structure. Wetlands occur west/southwest of the existing detention structure and the South Fork McCorkle Creek flows to the base of the detention structure where it enters an intake structure. The surrounding area consists of high-density residential development northeast of the project site and undeveloped forested areas to the west.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA sent out an initiation and determination letter on September 3, 2025 (BPA CR Project No.: WA 2025 142; DAHP Log No.: 2025-08-05433) to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP).

On September 4, 2025, DAHP concurred with BPA's area of potential effects (APE) and the determination of No Historic Properties affected, with the stipulation for an unanticipated discovery procedure. No other responses were received.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural resources or historic properties are inadvertently encountered during the implementation of the project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Grading and placement of structural fill for the proposed detention structure modifications would occur on fill material from the existing detention structure, permanently impacting approximately 2.1 acres. Standard construction best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to minimize erosion and sedimentation in nearby wetlands and waterways. If hazardous materials are identified in excavated soils, they would be disposed of off-site according to all local, state, and Federal regulations. The proposed action would not impact the current geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species present within or near the project area, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. A total of approximately 2.1 acres of grasses and shrubs would be removed, covered, or

crushed from structure construction. Disturbed and fill areas would be stabilized and reseeded with regionally-appropriate native seed mixes, and standard construction best management practices would minimize vegetation impacts, including the spread of noxious weeds.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior and wildlife displacement could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, there would be no permanent impacts to wildlife habitat, and temporarily disturbed or displaced wildlife would likely reoccupy the site following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: South Fork McCorkle Creek flows across the BPA ROW and enters the intake structure on the upstream side of the existing detention structure. Approximately 186 square feet of permanent impacts would occur to South Fork McCorkle Creek from filling in a portion of the old intake structure.

The applicant has obtained a standard individual permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, which included consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The Biological Opinion (BO) (NMFS No. WCR-2017-6362) dated May 29, 2017, addressed impacts to Lower Columbia River Coho Salmon ESU and Lower Columbia River Steelhead DPS and their critical habitats. There have been no changes to South Fork McCorkle Creek in the years after the issued permit and associated BO that would change coho salmon and steelhead juvenile access to the detention structure. The consensus from both NMFS and WDFW is that approximately 2 miles downstream of the project is a pump station with a screened culvert that is known to be a complete barrier for adult coho and steelhead. The BO says that juveniles can enter the small watershed during favorable flow conditions but will encounter aquatic resources unable to support yearling summer-rearing life histories exhibited by coho and steelhead. Therefore, NMFS considers the presence of listed fishes in the creek to be discountable. Additionally, it is assumed that the detention structure outlet pipe downstream of the BPA ROW also serves as a barrier to juvenile coho salmon and steelhead.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands were delineated within the project area that would be impacted by the project. Construction of the new intake structure and fill from raising the detention structure and new intake structure would result in approximately 0.14 acre of permanent wetland impacts. The applicant has acquired all applicable local, state, and Federal wetland permits, and would be responsible for implementing standard construction BMPs as well as any conditions specifically outlined in permit documentation to minimize and/or mitigate wetland impacts.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation would reach depths to groundwater during construction of the new intake structure given the presence of wetlands within the project site. However, the proposed action would not generate or use hazardous materials that would contaminate groundwater

or aquifers. Ground disturbance for the remainder of the project area would not reach depths to groundwater. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be consistent with the existing transmission line ROW land use and existing detention structure present within the BPA ROW and would not impact surrounding land uses. The project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of equipment and general construction activities would cause temporary visual impacts. When complete, the new detention structure would be raised by 15 feet resulting in minor obstructions of the viewshed; however, the new structure would be visually consistent with the existing conditions and in the same approximate location as the existing detention structure.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would produce minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from the use of vehicles, heavy equipment, and power tools during construction, which could be audible from nearby residential properties. Noise impacts would be temporary and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no permanent change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. The project is intended to increase safety by reducing the risk of flooding to downstream homes and businesses. Therefore, no impacts to human health are expected and flood risk would be reduced as a result of the proposed action.

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 proposed work would occur on BPA fee-owned property. No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

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