

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Big Eddy-Troutdale No. 1 230-kV Transmission Line Mile 38 and 39 Priority Conductor Replacement Project

**Project No. (if applicable):** 2,739

**Project Manager:** Todd Wehner, (CONTR) - TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Clackamas County and Hood River 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 replace severely damaged conductor, supporting hardware and associated fiber along the 38 and 39 mile of the Big Eddy-Troutdale No. 1-230 kV Transmission Line. The work would also include access road improvements and landing pad construction which is necessary in order to access this part of the transmission line and to allow for proper and safe placement of conductor stringing equipment. This repair is critical to the reliability of BPA's power grid. Total failure from severe wind or ice load conditions is imminent. Road improvements and landing pad construction would be initiated first and are set to begin July 20, 2015. Approximately 3 miles of access roads would be improved as well as approximately 0.62 acre of equipment landings would be constructed. Heavy equipment such as bulldozers, dump trucks, and rollers would likely be employed to accomplish road and landing work. Subsequently, conductor, hardware and fiber replacement would begin August 10, 2015 while the transmission line is under an electrical outage. This work would employ the use of a mobile tire mounted crane, bucket truck, stringing equipment, crew work trucks, utility vehicles and helicopter. One helicopter landing zone has been identified. The proposed project is located in foothills on both the Mt. Hood National Forest and private timberlands.

**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, July 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/ Laura Roberts*

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Katherine S. Pierce*

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 17, 2016

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 Big Eddy-Troutdale 230 kV Transmission Line Mile 38 and 39 Conductor Replacement Project is located in the following Township, Range, Sections listed below within Clackamas and Hood River counties, Oregon. The project area is located in the foothills northwest of Mt. Hood surrounded predominantly by secondary forest on both Mt. Hood National Forest and private timberland.

Township		Range		Sections
1	S	8	E	24,35
2	S	8	E	2,3

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u>                      OR SHPO, Grand Ronde, Umatilla, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs of Oregon did not respond to BPA's Letter of Determination that <b>no historic properties will be affected</b> by the project during the stipulated 30 day waiting period. Therefore according to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800, BPAs consultation requirements have been fulfilled.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u>                      Minimal soil disturbance; most areas would be rocky and erosion control measures would be used.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u>                      No special-status species present. Work is to be conducted in an existing transmission line right-of-way (ROW). Approximately 0.62 acre of low growing grasses and shrubs would be removed. Any unrocked disturbed areas would be seeded with a geographic and climate appropriate seed mix.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u>                      An occurrence of Northern Spotted Owl (Threatened) has been observed near the proposed project area closest</p>		

to structures 39/4 and 39/5. This is a historical record with the last observation occurring in 1981. The transmission line ROW and the surrounding area are either completely cleared of trees or are second growth Douglas fir and do not provide habitat necessary to support Northern Spotted Owls.

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



Explanation:

An existing ford near the head waters of Elk Creek is identified as Critical Habitat for Lower Columbia Chinook salmon (spring run-Threatened), Lower Columbia steelhead (summer and winter run-Threatened) and bull trout (Threatened). Presence of these species at this specific location is unknown. Due to the sensitive nature at this creek crossing, BPA plans to place two 40-foot temporary bridges at the ford crossing location.

To install temporary bridges scheduled for approximately July 25, 2015, an excavator crosses to the far side of the ford. From a location outside the ordinary high water mark the excavator places blocks and performs some grading to set the far side bridge foundation on. The near side foundation is set and the temporary bridges are staged on the near side. The far side machine then reaches across and picks up one end of the bridge to assist setting the temporary bridge, while a second excavator picks up the other side. There may be a few (3-5) light vehicle crossings before this work starts to assess and prepare the area. Once the temporary bridges are set, the ford is protected. Removal of temporary bridges, scheduled for approximately September 7, involves a similar set up but typically involves one or more additional trips through the ford to pick up the foundation and grading removal on the far side. BPA will apply for an extension of the in-water work window from August 15 to September 7 in order to continue crossing temporary bridges and complete the conductor replacement work and, once completed, temporary bridge removal.

Prior to crossing the ford or temporary bridges all equipment will be inspected daily for leaks and fixed or their use discontinued if leaks are found.

BPA has estimated approximately 100 trips will be needed to cross this creek in order to repair existing roads and approximately 80 trips will be needed to work on the towers. Installing a temporary bridge will allow safe passage over the creek while keeping most equipment and vehicle traffic out of the water therefore minimizing impacts to critical habitat and any fish that may be present in the near the ford.

BPA is carrying out on-going coordination with US Fish and Wildlife Service; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the Mt. Hood National Forest. Suggested Best Management Practices (see below) will be implemented and a detailed file will be kept of what actions were taken and on what date. Upon completion of the work this information will be compiled into a report and sent to the coordinating parties.

- For the bridge, minimize any structure below Ordinary High Water if possible.
- Implement an erosion control plan if any soil disturbance occurs.
- The bridge should not contain any treated wood.
- Complete the work within the ODFW in-water work window if possible.
- Consider mitigation, such as, riparian vegetation planting, large wood placement, etc. Work with the Mt. Hood National Forest for additional mitigation suggestions.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation:

None present

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation:

No new wells or use of ground water proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 2 feet; spill prevention measures would be present.

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

Explanation:

Approximately 0.62 acre of low growing grasses and shrubs would be removed within the existing transmission line ROW. This vegetation type is ubiquitous within the ROW and would not be impacted by this removal.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation:

There would be an addition of 0.62 acre of rock equipment landings which would be consistent with the other structures in the ROW and would not impact the visual quality of the surrounding environment.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation:

Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation:

Temporary noise due to road improvement and conductor replacement equipment.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation:

The project would not impact human health or safety

### **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, if necessary: Carry out ongoing consultation with NOAA Fisheries and US Fish and Wildlife Service for potential impacts to Threatened fish species and Critical Habitat.

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary: A qualified contractor certified in lead and asbestos abatement and building demolition would be used. Demolition debris would be handled and disposed of according to all applicable hazardous waste laws.

- 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, if necessary:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: The proposed project is located on Mt Hood National Forest and private timberland. BPA would continue ongoing coordination with the both parties.

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

Signed: /s/Laura Roberts  
Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: July 17, 2016