

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Correction of Western Oregon Line Impairments

**PP&A No.:** 3226

**Project Manager:** Thomas Murphy, TELP-TPP-3

**Location:** Curry and Coos Counties, 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 remove two critical line impairments on two different transmission line spans in Western Oregon: Fairview-Rogue 40/5-41/1 (Curry County) and Reedsport-Fairview 21/4-21/6 (Coos County). An impairment is an area where the distance from the conductor to the ground surface is inadequate, per National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards, resulting in a threat to line reliability and posing a risk to public health and safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure the line meets current National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) standards.

The proposed action at each impairment site would include the removal of any stumps or large woody debris, followed by excavation to a maximum depth of approximately 10-feet of soil to ensure adequate transmission line conductor clearance from the ground below. The size of the work area in the right-of-way will vary based on terrain, but is typically near the middle of the span, where the conductor sags closest to the ground. All of the proposed work will occur in the existing, cleared right-of-way corridor on relatively flat terrain, using existing access roads. Some minor access road maintenance may be needed on the existing gravel roads to the sites. Both impairments are on privately-owned land for which BPA has an easement. Equipment is likely to include a combination of the following: a dump truck, a bulldozer, a backhoe, an excavator, and work trucks. The sites and any redistributed material will be contoured to match surrounding terrain, seeded, and mulched to prevent erosion and provide site stabilization.

The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line to minimize risk of outages and maintain power delivery in the region. Due to the urgent nature of the activity, BPA is proposing to perform the work in summer-fall 2015. All work will be in accordance with NESC 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, 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/ Caitlin SH Colson*

Caitlin SH Colson  
Program Analyst

Concur:

*/s/ Katherine S. Pierce*

Katherine S. Pierce  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 20, 2015

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 Fairview-Rogue (Curry County) work site is on a steep sideslope of an unnamed hill in the Klamath Mountains with dense, impenetrable underbrush. The Reedsport-Fairview (Coos County) work site is on a sideslope of an unnamed ridge in the foothills of the Coast Range that is mostly disturbed by the presence of access roads.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>  <u>Explanation:</u> A survey and Section 106 consultation was completed for the Fairview-Rogue and Reedsport-Fairview line spans located in Curry and Coos Counties, respectively. No resources were identified in the vicinity of the work sites. SHPO concurrence on the Areas of Potential Affect was received on 12/19/2014; SHPO suggested subsurface probing in addition to a pedestrian survey. Shovel test probes were conducted as part of the archaeological survey by BPA contractor Archaeologist.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>  <u>Explanation:</u> The proposed work will create a disturbance area in each line span. Sites will be stabilized and excess material will be contoured to match the surrounding terrain, track-walked, seeded, and mulched.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b>  <u>Explanation:</u> No ESA- or special status species are known to exist in the vicinity of the work sites.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</b>  <u>Explanation:</u> No ESA- or special status species are known to exist in the vicinity of the work sites.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)</b>  <u>Explanation:</u> An intermittent stream is located within the Fairview-Rogue line span in Curry County. The intermittent stream is expected to be dry in the summer months when work is to be completed; additionally, the intermittent stream is located approximately 200ft down-slope from the impairment location and is buffered by vegetation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the work sites.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The proposed work is in an upland areas.

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

Explanation: Proposed action in existing ROW corridors will not impact land use.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Proposed action in existing ROW corridors will not alter or effect visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation will be temporary and negligible.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: Proposed action in existing ROW corridors will 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:

- 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:

- 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 work will occur within BPA transmission line right-of-way and access roads. The land owners will be notified.

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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/ Caitlin SH Colson  
Caitlin SH Colson, KEP-4

Date: July 20, 2015