

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 Transmission Line Access Road Improvements

PP&A Project No.: TBD

Project Manager: Micah Bandurraga – Civil Design – TELF-TPP-3

Location: Located in Flathead County, Montana; Kalispell District

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State	Ownership
Kalispell-Kerr No. 1	15/4-15/6	26N	21W	13	Flathead, MT	Private
	15/7			24		

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to perform routine road maintenance along BPA's Kalispell-Kerr No. 1 transmission line which involves improving approximately 1,900 feet of mainline access road servicing structures 15/4-15/7. Improvements include grading and shaping of roads, placing and compacting of rock surfacing, installation and maintenance of erosion control and water drainage features, both on and off the rights-of-way (ROW).

The roadwork is needed to improve access for crews that will be maintaining the transmission line and towers within the transmission line corridor. All proposed work will occur within the existing road prisms and will not result in disturbance outside of previously disturbed roadbeds. No unauthorized construction activities will occur in any water body including streams, ponds, wetlands, etc. The project includes but is not limited to:

- Reshaping, grading and compacting existing road surfaces
- Hauling, placing, and shaping of crushed rock
- Constructing or reconditioning of water bars, drain dips, roadside and outlet ditches

General equipment used for this type of project includes: graders, rollers, excavators, and dump trucks.

The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be done in accordance with the National Electric 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, 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/ Kevin George

Kevin George
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 6, 2015

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist
Effects Determination for T&E Species

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 work would take place in the existing BPA access road both on and off the right-of-way corridor. The access road and corridor are on low grade undulating slopes with interspersed wetland areas.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> According to the scope of the proposed work, the activity is not a type that would result in changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such historic properties are located in the area of potential effects. The proposed action is considered to be routine access road maintenance necessary to preserve existing infrastructure, maintain roadway safety, and manage stormwater run-off and will be limited to maintenance on an existing access road cut and prism and structure footprints in the cleared transmission line ROW.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inadvertent discovery form should be provided and explained to the road contractor. The contractor is to limit maintenance activities and equipment to the existing roadway, pullouts, and landings. In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area will be secured and the SHPO and the environmental project lead must be notified.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Material and equipment staging areas will be located on existing roads, structure landings, and turnarounds. Equipment is to be restricted to the existing road prisms, road fills, and structure landings. Excess soils are to be collected, deposited, and stabilized in upland areas approved by PP&A. As applicable, schedule work to occur when dry. Utilize BMPs to control erosion and run-off.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> This project requires no tree or vegetation clearing. All construction equipment will be thoroughly cleaned prior to coming onto project sites to remove weed seeds, vegetative matter, soils, oil and greases. No suitable habitat is present within the project area for listed plant species.</p>		

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



Explanation: No suitable habitat is present within the project area for listed wildlife species.

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



Explanation: This project requires no tree or vegetation removal, nor any new roads or landings. This project crosses no fish bearing streams. Provide adequately stocked oil spill response kits in all construction equipment. No work will be taking place in or adjacent Stoner Creek or Flathead Lake.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Utilize erosion control BMPs to protect delineated wetlands north of Tacking Creek Rd adjacent to FLAT-HOTS-1 21/3 and west of Tacking Creek Rd adjacent to 15/7 to protect wetland resources from inadvertent road materials and sediment from entering wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: All work takes place within a few feet of the ground surface. Spill prevention measures would be present on site during construction. Project would not result in any ground water withdrawals nor provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

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



Explanation: No change in land use and no specially designated areas identified. Limit equipment and material staging to existing access road prisms, fills, pull-outs, and structure landings.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project involves maintenance of an existing road and will not significantly alter or effect visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust or similar during project implementation is expected to be temporary and insignificant. Utilize dust prevention measures to limit dust impacting adjacent residences.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized. Equipment not to be left idling or unattended near residences.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: A Site Specific Safety Plan will be prepared for this project.

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Landowners will be contacted by the contractor prior to construction.

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

Signed: /s/ Kevin George
Kevin George

Date: July 6, 2015