

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Kalispell & Spokane Districts Road Maintenance Project

PP&A No.:

Project Manager: Micah Bandurraga

Location: Flathead, Lincoln, Mineral, Sanders, and Silver Bow Counties, Montana; and Bonner County, Idaho.

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

B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to repair approximately 22.4 miles of access roads within the Kalispell & Spokane Districts. Access road maintenance would include, but is not limited to, improving and constructing drain dips, water bars, rubber water flaps, landings, turn arounds, switchbacks, fords, and culverts within existing road prisms throughout the District. In addition, proposed road maintenance would also include: blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and spot and surface rock on existing road prisms to ensure safe access to structures. General equipment used for this type of road maintenance includes: graders, rollers, bull-dozers, brush hogs, excavators, and dump trucks.

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/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 20, 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.

Proposed Action: Kalispell & Spokane Districts Access Road Maintenance Project

Project Site Description

The proposed access road maintenance is located on rural public (Kootenai and Lolo National Forests) and private forest land, foothills, valley bottom, and rangeland. Additionally, the project area includes the following five habitat types: Montane Forest, Intermountain Grassland, Riparian, Scrub / Shrub Grassland, and Forested Scree. Please see Appendix A for legal locations.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Confederated Salish & Kootenai and Blackfoot Tribes did not respond to BPA's Letter of Determination that no historic properties would be affected by the project during the stipulated 30-day waiting period. Montana SHPO did respond with concurrence; therefore, according to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800, BPA's consultation requirements have been fulfilled.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Material and equipment staging areas would be located on existing roads, structure landings, and turnarounds. Equipment would be restricted to existing road prisms, road fills, and structure landings. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special-status plants present within the project area. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.		

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



Explanation: Grizzly bears and Canada lynx have been observed within a one-mile radius of the proposed work. Specifically, grizzly bears are present in the areas surrounding the Noxon – Libby No. 1 Line and Canada lynx are present in the areas surrounding Libby – Conkelley No. 1 Line. However, based on BPA’s own investigations and consultation with the Kootenai and Lolo National Forests and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), both National Forests and the USFWS agree that the proposed maintenance activities would have no effect to these species. A concurrence letter, dated March 30, 2016, from the Kootenai National Forest states that the project area does not contain suitable habitat for grizzly bears or Canada lynx and, therefore, would have no effect on the species. Other special-status species and critical habitat reviewed was found not to be present within the project area.

Noxon – Libby No. 1 - Designated Grizzly Bear Area - All construction crews would observe the timing restrictions and proper storage of food, garbage, and other attractants within grizzly bear habitat as specified in the Kootenai National Forest Food Storage Order (Special Order, Kootenai National Forest, 2001; Occupancy and Use Restrictions and Food Storage for the Cabinet/Yaak Ecosystem). To minimize the potential for grizzly bear impacts, workers would follow the Kootenai National Forest Food Storage Order and activities on gated roads would not begin until after June 15th to avoid the spring bear window.

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



Explanation: There is no proposed road maintenance involving a perennial water body or any designated bull trout habitat. However, there is one culvert replacement on an ephemeral, non-fish bearing drainage and one ford replacement on an ephemeral seep. These activities would have no effect on bull trout or any other listed ESA species, as the work would be done in the dry and would use all necessary BMP measures. These water-related activities would be authorized under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit #3 and do not require pre-construction notification because the anticipated impacts would be less than 1/10 of an acre. These activities do require a SPA 124 Permit through the USFS and a State of Montana 401 Water Quality Certification.

Designated Bull Trout Critical Habitat – The replacement of a culvert on an ephemeral draw, located on Taft – Hot Springs No. 1 at Structure 10/5, is within 1000 feet of Designated Bull Trout Critical Habitat. All culvert work would be performed in dry conditions, with no flowing water and would incorporate “washed,” angular rock that is at least 12 inches in diameter.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Mapped wetlands are present along the Taft – Hot Springs No. 1 - 29/5 and Libby – Conkelley No. 1 - 40/1 transmission lines. Approximately 450 square feet of palustrine wetland would be impacted on the Taft – Hot Springs Line at 29/5 location and approximately 300-square feet of palustrine wetland would be impacted on the Libby – Conkelley Line at 40/1 location. These relevant road maintenance activities and anticipated impacts to wetlands would be authorized under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit #12 and would not require pre-construction notification because the anticipated impacts would be less than 1/10 of an acre, but do require a SPA 124 Permit through the USFS and a State of Montana 401 Water Quality Certification.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. 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 would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality as a result of the proposed road maintenance.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in 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, 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: BPA Realty will make the necessary landowner notifications.

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: September 20, 2016

Appendix A

Locations:

Line Corridor	Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	3/1	20N, 31W, Section 29	Mineral, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	3/2, 3/4	20N, 31W, Section 20	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	4/4, 4/5	20N, 31W, Section 17	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	5/3	20N, 31W, Section 8	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	6/2, 6/5	20N, 31W, Section 4&5	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	7/1, 7/2, 7/4, 7/5	21N, 31W, Section 34	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	8/3	21N, 31W, Section 35	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	9/1 ,9/2 ,9/4, 9/5	21N, 31W, Section 25&26	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	10/1, 10/2, 10/3	21N, 30W, Section 30	Sanders, MT	Private
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	10/5	21N, 30W, Section 19	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	11/2-11/5, 12/1-12/2	21N, 30W, Section 20	Sanders, MT	Private & USFS
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	12/3, 13/1	21N, 30W, Section 21	Sanders, MT	USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	14/1, 14/2	21N, 30W, Section 15&22	Sanders, MT	Private & USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	14/4	21N, 30W, Section 14&23	Sanders, MT	Private & USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	15/2	21N, 30W, Section 14&13	Sanders, MT	Private & USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	27/5-28/5	21N, 28W, Section 22	Sanders, MT	Private & USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	29/1, 29/5	21N, 28W, Sections 23&26	Sanders, MT	Private
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	36/3-36/4, 37/1,37/3	20N, 27W, Section 2&3	Sanders, MT	Private & USFS-LNF
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	37/4	20N, 27W, Section 11	Sanders, MT	Private
Taft-Hot Springs	37/5	20N, 27W, Section 12	Sanders,	State

No 1			MT	
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	46/4, 47/1	20N, 25W, Section 5	Sanders, MT	Private
Taft-Hot Springs No 1	47/2	20N, 25W, Section 4	Sanders, MT	Private

Locations:

Line Corridor	Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership
Noxon-Libby No 1	15/5	25N, 30W, Section 4	Lincoln, MT	USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	16/1-17/1	26N, 30W, Section 33	Lincoln, MT	USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	17/2-17/4, 17/5-18/1	26N, 30W, Section 34	Lincoln, MT	Private & USFS-KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	18/2, 18/3-19/1	26N, 30W, Section 35	Lincoln, MT	USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	19/2-20/1	26N, 30W, Section 36	Lincoln, MT	USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	20/2-20/4	26N, 29W, Section 25&30	Lincoln, MT	Private & USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	21/1-21/5	26N, 29W, Section 19	Lincoln, MT	USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	22/1-22/2	26N, 29W, Section 18	Lincoln, MT	Private & USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	22/4-23/2, 23/3-23/4	26N, 29W, Section 17	Lincoln, MT	Private & USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	24/1-24/3	26N, 29W, Section 09,16&17	Lincoln, MT	Private & USFS - KNF
Noxon-Libby No 1	42/2-43/1	28N, 27W, Section 20	Lincoln, MT	Private
Noxon-Libby No 1	43/2-43/3, 43/4-44/1	28N, 27W, Section 21	Lincoln, MT	Private
Noxon-Libby No 1	44/2-45/1	28N, 27W, Section 22&27	Flathead, MT	Private

Locations:

Libby-Conk No 1	37/1-37/4	28N, 25W, Section 17	Flathead, MT	Private
Libby-Conk No 1	38/1-38/2	28N, 25W, Section 17&20	Flathead, MT	Private
Libby-Conk No 1	38/3-39/2	28N, 25W, Section 16&21	Flathead, MT	Private
Libby-Conk No 1	39/3,39/4	28N, 25W, Section 22	Flathead, MT	Private & State
Libby-Conk No 1	40/1-40/3	28N, 25W, Section	Flathead, MT	Private

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Locations:

Anaconda-Silverbow No 1	9/1-10/1	3N, 9W, Section 8, 9 & 16	Silver Bow, MT	Private & State
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Locations:

Columbia Falls Substation	N/A	30N, 20W, Section 15	Flathead, MT	BPA
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Locations:

Bonner's Ferry-Sand Creek No 1	9/2-9/3	59N, 01W, Section 27	Bonner, ID	Private
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