

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Coyote Hills Radio Site, Redmond District, Access Road Maintenance Project

Project No.: 395566

Project Manager: Clint Stanton, Access Road Engineer – TFLF-TPP-3

Location: Lake County, 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 perform routine road maintenance, repair, and improvements on the Coyote Hills Radio Site Access Road Maintenance Project. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing infrastructure and roadway safety. The proposed project includes existing access road improvements (28,600 linear feet).

The project would involve laying gravel and installing a drain dip within the existing road prism. No in-water work would be conducted.

The road maintenance activities are proposed to be conducted during 2017. If prior to or during construction activities the proposed action may result in adverse impacts to resources that are not described within this categorical exclusion, coordination with the appropriate agencies and a reevaluation of effects may be warranted.

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/ John Wiley

John Wiley

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 3, 2017

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 proposed project is located in rural Lake County, OR. Land use within the project vicinity includes agriculture, open rangeland, and native steppe habitats. The approximate site elevation is between 4,500 and 6,000 feet above sea level. The project area includes Snyder Ranch Road, which traverses native shrub steppe habitat consisting of primarily sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and native bunchgrasses in the high desert. The project crosses land owned by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Oregon Department of State Lands (ODSL), and private property.

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> This portion of access road has been recently surveyed as part of a separate BPA project. Archaeological isolates were identified but no sites. Isolates are not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity would stop, the area would be secured, and the SHPO and the environmental project lead would be notified. Work would not commence until the SHPO has cleared the area.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project includes laying gravel on an existing road prism and installing a drain dip to improve drainage. The proposed action would likely conserve soil resources by reducing ponding and soil erosion within the roadway. The drain dip connects to a 100-square-foot stock pond adjacent to the access road that retains water during the winter and spring, and dries during the summer. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. Therefore, the proposed action would have limited impacts to geology and soils.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> A site evaluation was conducted by Otak biologists on August 3, 2016. Plants occurring within the existing roadway are largely absent. No trees or woody vegetation would be removed as a result of the project. No special-status plant species or their habitats were documented to occur within the vicinity or were observed during the field survey due to lack of suitable habitat. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species and limited impacts to other native and non-native vegetation.		

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



Explanation:

A site evaluation was conducted by an Otak biologist on August 3, 2016, to evaluate site conditions and the surrounding environment. No suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species was found to occur within the project area. An official federally-listed species list was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation database (IPaC) on July 25, 2016. No federally-listed or proposed listed species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS or NMFS have been documented to occur within 2 miles of the proposed project limits. The proposed project actions would occur within the existing road prism; therefore, any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be temporary during construction. See the Endangered Species Act Letter of No Effect for this project for further details. Therefore, the project would have no impact to special-status wildlife species.

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



Explanation:

The existing road crosses several draws that likely have some ephemeral surface flows during the winter and precipitation events; however, no work is proposed within these ephemeral features. No special-status fish species are present within this waterbody. No in-water work or work that could result in impacts to any waterways is proposed. The work as proposed is exempt from Corps Section 404 and DSL permit applications. Therefore, the project would have no effect to waterbodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation:

No wetlands are present in the project area. Artificially constructed stock ponds are located adjacent to the existing road but do not meet the definition of a regulated wetland, nor would they be impacted by the proposed project. Work would be limited to upland environments. Therefore, the proposed action would have no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation:

Groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted by the proposed project as the project does not include any groundwater withdrawals or aquifer recharge areas. The proposed work is limited to shallow soils and previously disturbed areas. There would be no impacts to groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation:

No change in land use is proposed as part of the project. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits. There would be no impacts to land use or specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation:

There are limited or no residences within visual range of the work limits. The proposed project feature is consistent with existing roads. There would be no impacts to visual resources.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation:

The proposed project is expected to reduce dust generation and improve air quality along the rural access road by covering exposed soils with a gravel surface layer. Minor vehicle emissions during construction would be temporary in duration.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

Noise generated from construction is expected to be localized and temporary in nature. Construction is expected to last approximately two weeks. The current level of road use is not expected to change, and no operational noise increases are expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

Project activities 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:

- 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

Within the portions of the project limits that are privately held, the Access Road Engineer would contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners prior to project construction.

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

Signed: /s/ John Wiley
John Wiley EP-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: March 3, 2017