

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Adel 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 Adel 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 (18,600 linear feet).

The project would involve laying gravel and installing three drain dips 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.

Proposed Action: Adel Radio Site, Redmond District, Access Road Maintenance

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located near the community of Adel in rural Lake County, OR. Land use within the project vicinity includes agriculture and cattle grazing. The approximate site elevation is between 4,840 and 6,500 feet above sea level. The project is located in high desert habitat on Western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) dominated slopes intermixed with sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) and rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus* sp.) shrubs. The plateau area in the vicinity of the radio tower is dominated by sagebrush and rabbitbrush.

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 road has been previously and recently surveyed as part of a separate BPA project. No cultural resources were identified and there are no cultural resource issues associated with this section of road. 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 three drain dips to improve roadway drainage. The proposed action would likely conserve soil resources by reducing ponding and soil erosion within the roadway. 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 Otak biologists 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. 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 impacts to federally-listed wildlife or other wildlife species.

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



Explanation:

The existing road crosses a mapped intermittent stream that is mapped as flowing to Deep Creek. However, the mapped intermittent stream alignment has a manmade berm across the drainage upslope of the access road that retains surface waters for grazing cattle and has an ephemeral flow regime. Surface water flows in the drainage, if present, would likely occur during winter and spring following snowmelt. The entire drainage was completely dry at the time of the site visit. 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. An artificially constructed stock pond is located adjacent to the existing road within a drawing, but it neither meets the definition of a regulated wetland, nor would it 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 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

Land ownership within the project limits is 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