

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Napavine – Allston No. 1 Road Improvement Project

PP&A No.: 2,637

Project Manager: Todd Wehner, (CONTR) - TEP-TPP-1

Location: Cowlitz County, Washington

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

B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) owns and operates the 500 kV Napavine-Allston No. 1 high-voltage transmission line. The line extends from Napavine Substation near Napavine, WA, in Lewis County, WA, to Allston Substation near Rainier, OR, in Columbia County, OR.

BPA is proposing to rebuild and improve approximately 1 mile of the Napavine-Allston No. 1 access roads in Cowlitz County, WA, near Castle Rock, WA, in line mile 28 of the line as it trends south from Napavine Substation. Work would include blading, regrading, and the addition of road surface gravel. A landing near a structure in the transmission right-of-way would be constructed, and an existing landing would be improved. Drainage features such as drain dips and culverts would be added to allow for surface water runoff. BPA also proposes to install an 80 ft. long bridge over Delameter Creek in a former ford location to improve access to several transmission structures south of the waterway. The work would proceed in the summer of 2017.

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/ Aaron Siemers

Aaron Siemers

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 5, 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 project is in the Willapa Hills ecoregion of the Coast Range, characterized by low elevation, rolling hills and mountains. Streams are typically low gradient and exhibit low flows in the dry summer months. While historically extensively logged, Douglas-fir and western hemlock forest are prominent, with a lower canopy layer of sword ferns, vine maple, Oregon grape and rhododendron. Wetter areas and riparian zones may have red alder, western red cedar, and big leaf maple trees present. Land use in the immediate project area is rural residential and agricultural.

The BPA transmission right-of-way is approximate 450-feet wide in the project area, and contains three steel lattice high voltage transmission lines, including the 500 kV Napavine-Allston No. 1 transmission line.

The northern project area near Delameter Creek is at an elevation range around 200 feet. The project area is accessed by a private driveway and is adjacent to a residential house. Delameter Creek is a tributary of the Cowlitz River. The ordinary high water mark at the crossing is approximately 20 feet. A wetland is present immediately north of Delameter Creek and adjacent to the creek, with soft rush, reed canary grass and bent grass present. The cleared right-of-way is dominated by grasses, with St. John’s wort, Scotch broom, the occasional thistle, and blackberry also present.

The southern work area is approximately 1000 feet to the south; however, due to local topography, the access roads approach the work site from the south. Topography is more varied and ranges from 200 to 500 feet. The vegetation adjacent to the existing BPA access roads consists of grasses, with patches of blackberry, Scotch broom, St. John’s wort, and sword fern present.

Township		Range		Section	County	Ownership
9	N	2	W	19	Cowlitz	Private

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"/>

Explanation:

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) engaged in consultation with the Cowlitz Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde, the Shoalwater Bay Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP).

BPA issued a Letter of Determination on May 13th, 2016, that no historic properties would be affected by the project. An addendum to the original cultural resource report and updated Letter of Determination were issued

April 5, 2017. BPA received an updated letter of concurrence April 5, 2017, from DAHP. No other consulted parties responded during the stipulated 30-day waiting period. 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**

Explanation:

Work would involve blading and regrading of existing access road, and constructing new access road to transmission towers. Local geology would not be impacted by project activities. Disturbed soil would be smoothed, regraded, stabilized and revegetated as part of the project's erosion and sediment control plan (ESCP). Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to minimize erosion and sedimentation during construction and post-construction.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)

Explanation:

There are no special-status plant species present. Work is to be conducted in an existing transmission line right-of-way (ROW). Impacts to plants and vegetation in the work area will be minimized during construction by establishing work areas and limiting ground disturbance. Disturbed areas will be reseeded with a meadow seed mix for upland areas, and a wetland seed mix for wetland areas.

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

Explanation:

There are no special-status species or designated habitat present in the work areas. The work would be performed in the cleared and maintained transmission line right-of-way. Impacts to wetland habitat due to ground disturbance will be minimized and restored upon project completion. The soils will be regraded and revegetated as necessary. Please review the accompanying Effects Determination Memo for the project if additional information is required.

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

Delameter Creek flows through the work area, and several endangered anadromous fish are documented in the waterway. BPA has consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding potential adverse effects to endangered anadromous fish, and would implement mitigation measures during construction. Please review the accompanying Effects Determination Memo for the project if additional information is required.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation:

Wetlands are present in the work area, and an approximately 20 ft. section of new access road would be re-directed through wetland. BPA has conducted a wetland survey and in accordance with the Clean Water Act has submitted permit application documents to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the WA Department of Ecology. The USACE has authorized the project under Nationwide Permit 14 (Linear Transportation Projects) and issued a preliminary jurisdiction determination. Impacts to wetlands have been minimized during project planning, and while new access road would be constructed within wetland, approximately 125 of existing access road footprint within wetlands would be abandoned. BMPs would be utilized during construction to further minimize impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation:

The work would not involve new groundwater wells or ground disturbance that would impact aquifers.

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

Explanation:

No existing land use or specially designated areas would be impacted by the project.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation:

The proposed work would be conducted in the transmission right-of-way, adjacent to existing transmission structures and access roads. Visual quality would not be significantly impacted by the project.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation:

The project would create temporary dust and vehicle emission due to construction; however, no significant impacts would occur.

11. **Noise**

Explanation:

The project would create temporary noise due to construction; however, no significant impacts would occur.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation:

During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. The project would not have significant adverse impacts 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: n/a

- 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: n/a

- 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: n/a

- 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: n/a

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The proposed project is located on private land. BPA would continue ongoing coordination with the landowners and land management agencies during project activities.

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

Signed:

/s/ Aaron Siemers
Aaron Siemers
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: May 5, 2017