

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Idaho Falls District Road Maintenance Project

PP&A No.: 3682

Project Manager: Micah Bandurraga

Location: Cassia, Fremont, Bonneville, Idaho; Teton County, Wyoming

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 25 miles and construct approximately 0.50 miles of access road to various transmission line structures in southern and eastern Idaho and western Wyoming within BPA's Idaho Falls District. The access road repair would be for the following transmission lines: Minadoka-Powerhouse Unity No.1, Drummond-Mack's Inn No. 1, Targhee-Drummond No. 1, Palisades-Cattle Creek No. 1, Cattle Creek-Goshen No. 1, and Swan Valley-Teton No.1 (see Table 1 for more detailed locations).

Access road work would include, but is not limited to, improving and constructing 64 drain dips, two landings, and two fords within the District. In addition, proposed road maintenance and new road construction 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.

BPA has easements for the roads. The underlying landowners crossed include the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, state, and private ownership.

Table 1. Access Road Repair Locations

Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership	USGS Quad Name
Minidoka PH- Unity No 1				
13/7-14/5	10S, 25E, Section 32, 33	Cassia, ID	Private	Rupert SE
Drummond-Macks Inn No 1				
31/8-31/9	13N, 43E, Section 25 & 36	Fremont, ID	USFS, State & Private	Island Park
31/8-31/9	12N, 43E, Section 1	Fremont, ID	USFS	Island Park
Targhee-Drummond No 1				
11/1-11/6	5N, 44E, Section 9 & 10	Teton, ID	Private	Packsaddle Lake
26/2	7N, 43E, Section 2	Fremont, ID	Private	Drummond
Palisades-Cattle Creek No 1				
4/8	1N, 44E, Section 26 & 35	Bonneville, ID	USFS & Private	Thompson Peak
10/7	1N,43E, Section 13, 14	Bonneville, ID	USFS, BLM &	Swan Valley

Structures	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership	USGS Quad Name
			Private	
11/2-11/4	1N,43E, Sections 14	Bonneville, ID	USFS & Private	Swan Valley
12/4-12-7	1N, 43E, Section 9, 10, 15, 16	Bonneville, ID	USFS & Private	Swan Valley, Conant Valley
21/3-23/6	1N, 42E, Sections 31,32 & 33	Bonneville, ID	USFS & Private	Castle Rock
23/7-24/5	1N, 41E, Section 36	Bonneville, ID	State & Private	Castle Rock
27/2-27/7	1N,41E, Section 33	Bonneville, ID	Private	Jumpoff Hill, Lone Pine Ridge
27/8-28/6	1N,41E, Section 31, 32	Bonneville, ID	BLM & Private	Lone Pine Ridge
28/7-29/7	1N,41E, Section 31	Bonneville, ID	BLM & Private	Lone Pine Ridge
29/8	1N,40E, Section 36	Bonneville, ID	Private	Lone Pine Ridge
30/1-31/5	1N,40E, Section 35, 36	Bonneville, ID	Private	Lone Pine Ridge
Cattle Creek-Goshen No 1				
2/6-2/7	1N, 40E, Section 33	Bonneville, ID	BLM & Private	Lone Pine Ridge & Ozone
3/1-3/9	1N, 40E, Sections 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34	Bonneville, ID	BLM & Private	Ozone & Bone
3/1-3/9	1S, 40E, Section 5	Bonneville, ID	Private	Ozone & Bone
13/2	1S, 38E, Section 1	Bonneville, ID	BLM & Private	Wolverine
13/2	1N, 38E, Section 35	Bonneville, ID	Private	Wolverine
14/2	1S, 38E, Section 2, 11, 12	Bonneville, ID	Private	Wolverine
17/4	1S, 38E, Section 17	Bonneville, ID	Private	Goshen
Swan Valley- Teton No. 1				
8/2-10/3	3N, 44E, Sections 28,29, 31& 32	Bonneville, ID	USFS & Private	Stouts Mountain
18/2	3N, 45E, Section 22	Teton, ID	USFS & Private	Fourth of July Peak
22/9-23/6	41N, 118W, Sections 5 & 6	Teton, WY	USFS	Victor
24/5-26/7	41N, R118W, Sections 9, 15, 16, 16, 22 & 23	Teton, WY	USFS	Victor & Rendezvous Peak
28/1-29/3	41N, 118W, Sections 24 &25	Teton ,WY	USFS	Rendezvous Peak, Teton Pass
29/4-30/4	41N, 117W, Sections 19 & 30	Teton, WY	USFS & Private	Rendezvous Peak & Teton Pass
34/4-35/1	41N, 117W, Sections 2,3 &10	Teton, WY	USFS & Private	Teton Village
35/3, 35/4, 35/7	41N, 117W, Section 2	Teton, WY	Private	Teton Village

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/ Stacy L. Mason
Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 31, 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: Idaho Falls District Access Road Maintenance Project

Project Site Description

The proposed access road maintenance is located on rural private and public forest land (including the Bridger-Teton National Forest and the Caribou-Targhee National Forest), foothills, valley bottom, rangeland, and agricultural land. Additionally, the project area includes the following five habitat types: Montane Forest, Intermountain Grassland, Riparian, Scrub / Shrub Grassland, and Agricultural.

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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA's effects determination and SHPO concurrence dates are listed below.</p> <p>Minidoka PH-Unity : ID SHPO Feb 18 (no effect to historic properties) Drummond-Macks: ID SHPO Feb 18 (no adverse effect) Targhee-Drummond: ID SHPO Feb 18 (no effect) Palisades-Cattle Creek: ID SHPO Feb 18 (no effect) Cattle Creek-Goshen: no comment past 30 day window (BPA recommendation of placing protective fencing at site near access road work) Swan Valley-Teton: ID SHPO April 22 (no adverse effect) WY SHPO April 12 (no adverse effect)</p> <p>No response was received from the Shoshone –Bannock Tribes.</p> <p>One site on the Cattle Creek-Goshen line will be fenced off in the field to protect it during construction.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><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.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No known federal/special status plants present within the project area. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.</p>		

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



Explanation: Grizzly bears and Canada lynx are found within the Northern Rockies Ecosystem. At this time, there have been no Canada lynx sightings, tracks, or scat observed within this portion of the Bridger-Teton (BTNF) or Caribou-Targhee National Forests (CTNF) (Bridger-Teton National Forest Wildlife Biologist Kerry Murphy, personal communication, July 25, 2016).

In addition, grizzly bears are suspected to only travel through the areas surrounding the Swan Valley – Teton No. 1 Line.

Therefore, based on BPA investigations and consultation with the BTNF, CTNF, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), all agencies agree that the proposed maintenance activities would have no effect to these species. A concurrence email dated March 14, 2016 and phone conversations with wildlife biologist Kerry Murphy on March 8-9, 2016, from the BTNF concluded 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 was reviewed and was found not to be present within the project area.

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. However, there are three proposed ford replacements on ephemeral draws. This activity would have no effect on fish 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 #14 and do not require pre-construction notification because the anticipated impacts would be less than 1/10 of an acre.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Wetlands are present along the following lines/structures: Swan Valley-Teton (24/3), Cattle Creek-Goshen (3/2-3/3), and Drummond-Mack's Inn (Mile 32). These wetlands would be avoided and protected by fencing and signage and therefore would not be impacted.

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: Coordination has occurred and is ongoing with the USFS and BLM. Additional landowner notifications will be sent prior to construction activities.

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: May 31, 2017