

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** North Bonneville-Midway Transmission Line Corridor fence and gate installation

**LURR No.:** 20160262

**Project Manager:** Laura Loop TERR-3  
Scott Williams TFD-The Dalles

**Location:** Skamania County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B.4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration proposes to allow a landowner to graze cattle and install two sections of fence, each with a gate, across BPA fee-owned right-of-way and the access roads of the North Bonneville-Midway No. 1 and Underwood Tap to Bonneville No. 2 transmission lines, in Skamania County, WA.

The fences would be three-strand barbed wire fences about 4 feet high. One fence would be about 130 feet long, near structure 11/2 of the North Bonneville-Midway line, along Indian Cabin Road, about a mile east of the town of Carson, WA. The second fence would be about 435 feet long, between structures 11/3 and 11/4 of the North Bonneville-Midway line, next to Kelly-Henke Road, about a mile northwest of Home Valley, WA. BPA would provide the gates to the landowner and the landowner would install them. The fencing and gates would help allow BPA to thwart trespassors from accessing BPA's fee property as well as allow the landowner to contain grazing livestock and prevent trespassing hunters, campers, and 4-wheelers from accessing their property. The landowner would allow about 10-15 cows or calves to graze on the right-of-way land on a sporadic basis.

**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/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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

Date: August 24, 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:** North Bonneville-Midway Transmission Line Corridor fence and gate installation

### Project Site Description

The fence and gate installation and grazing use would be on maintained BPA right-of-way and access roads. The surrounding topography consists of sloping hills with neighboring parcels comprised of forested areas, livestock pastures, and flat semi-rural homesites. A review of the National Wetland Inventory, soil information, topography, and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or waterbodies at the site. The Wind River is approximately 500 feet to the south and west of the project location.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area for the installation of the fencing and gates does not have potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be minimal soil disturbance for installation of the fencing and gates, as well as for periodic grazing of livestock. Some digging expected to establish posts. All work is occurring in the established BPA right-of-way.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project would be occurring in the BPA right-of-way that is currently managed for low-growing vegetation. There are no listed or special-status species present.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The work would be in established BPA right-of-way located approximately 500 feet to the south of a broad area identified as critical habitat for the northern spotted owl. No trees would be removed, and the site is not identified to provide spotted owl habitat or nesting sites. Construction of the fence and gate is expected to occur during daytime hours with limited to no effect to any listed or special-status species.		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The nearest water body is the Wind River, which is located approximately 500 feet south and west of the project location and is designated critical habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead. There would be no		

in-water work occurring and any grazing animals in the right-of-way would not be near the Wind River.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands are present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The project would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

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

Explanation: The fencing and gates would allow for continued livestock grazing by adjacent landowner and would help prevent trespassing by hunters and four-wheeled vehicles. The fencing and gates would be in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The USFS has determined that the livestock fence and associated gates are a use allowed outright in the Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No direct impact. Installation of fence and gates may reduce trespass by hunters and four-wheeled vehicles.

### **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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA Realty is in coordination with landowner.

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

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey, ECT-4

Date: August 24, 2017