

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Dworshak Powerhouse – Dworshak Structure 2/3 Urgent Culvert Replacement

Project No.: 4627

Project Manager: Robert Zeller – TFSF-Bell

Location: Clearwater, ID

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) proposes to perform in-kind replacement of two damaged culverts in the Spokane TLM District. The proposed action would reduce the risk of an access road washout. Additionally, the proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. The culverts would be installed by digging through the road prism with a backhoe, cleaning material from the base of where the burned culvert was located and then placing the new culverts in the same location. Small areas of the adjacent road prism would be impacted by the excavation. The project site would be accessed using existing roads and no other access road or landing improvements would be needed.

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, Jul. 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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Date: March 31, 2021

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

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 confined to the areas immediately adjacent to DWPH-DWOK -1 Structure 2/3. One culvert is located to the northeast of the access road and the other is located to the southwest. Both culverts are located in Township 37N, Range 1E, Section 27. The project area is on an access road that is predominantly steep forested slopes characterized by Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, western hemlock, and western red cedar.

Proposed maintenance activity would be performed in the existing transmission line access road, on privately-owned lands.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Two culverts were completely burned through on the access road between the Dworshak Powerhouse and Dworshak Substation near the vicinity of structure 2/3. One culvert is located to the northeast of the access road and the other is located to the southwest. Both culverts are located in Township 37 N, Range 1 E, Section 27. New 18 inch culverts would be installed to replace the melted/burned 18 inch culverts. The culverts would be installed by digging through the road prism, cleaning material from the base of where the burned culvert was located and then placing the new culvert in the same location. Small areas of the adjacent road prism would be impacted by the digging. The access road where the culverts are located is extremely steep, unrecorded archaeological sites are highly unlikely to be present, and no recorded archaeological sites are present. Background research was performed by Tia Cody, BPA contract archaeologist. Any other cultural resources that may be present would not be affected because the replacement is in-kind and the holes where the culverts were located are still present. The only thing missing is the actual culverts themselves. Not replacing the culverts would result in the road and nearby hillside washing out which would itself greatly impact any cultural resources that could be present.

Because the two culverts would be replaced in-kind with only minimal impact to the already disturbed road prism, the undertaking has *no to potential to cause effects* to historic properties consistent with 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1).

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during culvert replacement. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state or federally-listed sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is not located within a floodplain and there are no nearby water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish. Erosion control best management practices would be used to ensure sedimentation into any water body does not occur.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 2 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use. No specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line access road right-of-ways. Replacement of the culverts would be in kind and replaced in the same location.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

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: 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: 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: 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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty personnel and the environmental specialist have coordinated the proposed project activities with the landowner prior to project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities have been addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz, EPR-Bell-1
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: March 31, 2021