

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Noxon-Libby No. 1 Span 14/4, 14/5, 17/4, and 21/1 Impairment Remedy

**PP&A Project No.:** 3775

**Project Manager:** Thomas Murphy, TELP-TPP-3

**Location:** Lincoln County, MT

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to remedy 4 impairments along the Noxon-Libby No. 1 corridor ahead on line from structures 14/4, 14/5, 17/1, and 21/1. Impairments occur when the distance between a surface and the overhead conductor are not sufficient to meet safety and reliability standards. The proposed project would occur within the Kootenai National Forest in Lincoln County, MT.

BPA is proposing to repair the 4 impairments along the Noxon-Libby No. 1 corridor by excavating earth to mitigate the 4 impairments ahead on line at structures 14/4, 14/5, 17/4, and 21/1. The site will be accessed using existing access roads.

The two locations in the 14 mile line are along the access road itself. These will be excavated using dozers and excavators, and the road reconstructed to connect back with the existing road. Ground disturbance may occur outside of the impaired area, along the road in order to re-grade the road.

The 17 mile and 21 mile impairments are on outcroppings above the road and will be excavated using excavators and rock hammer as necessary

**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/ Michelle Colletti  
Michelle Colletti  
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: Septemert 20, 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: Noxon-Libby No. 1 Span 14/4, 14/5, 17/4, and 21/1 Impairment Remedy

#### Project Site Description

The proposed impairments project, located in the Kootenai Nation Forest, would excavate soil and rock in order to increase the distance between the ground surface and the overhead conductor. Four locations along the Noxon-Libby No. 1 line would be excavated (14/4, 14/5, 17/4, and 21/1), two in the 14 mile which occur within the access road itself and two in the 17 and 21 miles which occur as rock outcroppings adjacent to the road. Impairment areas would be excavated using dozers, excavators, and rock hammers, if necessary. Following excavation, access roads would be reestablished by grading and shaping.

#### 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:

- A cultural survey was conducted at all Noxon-Libby No.1 span impairment locations. Report findings indicated no historic properties affected by undertaking. MT SHPO concurred with BPA's No Adverse Effect/No Historic Properties Affected determination for all Noxon-Libby No. 1 impairment project locations listed in this CX.
- Crews and equipment are to use existing access roads to and from each work site. Any access road maintenance performed will be limited to the existing road prism.
- In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured and the SHPO and the environmental project lead will be notified.

2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
----------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

Explanation: The project would involve soil removal and disturbance at all four impairment locations. Erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to stabilize soil during and after construction.

3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

Explanation: No known federal/special-status plants present within the project area. Disturbed areas would be reseeded as necessary.

- ✓ The Kootenai National Forest has designated an adjacent portion of the access road as a Noxious Weed Area. Avoid entering the designated area. Additional measures, including vehicle wash stations, would need to be implemented if accessing the Noxious Weed Area is necessary.
  - Noxon – Libby No. 1 Line – Structures 16/2-17/1

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

Explanation: Grizzly bears have been observed within a one-mile radius of the proposed work. However, based on BPA's own investigations and consultation with the Kootenai National Forest, the proposed activities would have no effect on grizzly bears.

To minimize the potential for grizzly bear impacts all construction crews would observe the timing restrictions on gated roads where construction activities would not begin until after June 15<sup>th</sup> to avoid the spring bear window and proper storage of food, garbage, and other attractants within grizzly bear habitat as specified in the Kootenai National Forest Food Storage Order (Special Order, Kootenai National Forest, 2001; Occupancy and Use Restrictions and Food Storage for the Cabinet/Yaak Ecosystem).

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

Explanation: There is no proposed activity involving a perennial water body or any designated bull trout habitat.

✓ Use work area isolation BMPs to prevent erosion and runoff from entering neighboring waters.

6. Wetlands

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the work sites.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Explanation: The proposed work is not located near any known aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially Designated Areas

Explanation: The work is on existing right-of-way and access roads and will not impact land use.

9. Visual Quality

Explanation: Proposed action is on existing access roads and will not alter or effect visual quality

10. Air Quality

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation will be temporary and negligible. Water and other BMPs would be used to minimize fugitive dust and sediment erosion at the project sites.

11. Noise

Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized.

12. Human Health and Safety

Explanation: Proposed action is on existing right-of-way and access roads and will 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**

Description: Coordination with the Kootenai National Forest service occurred in May 2017. Sandi Mason, the Program Manager for Land and Special Uses in the Kootenai National Forest service was notified of the planned work.

---

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

Signed: /s/ Michelle Colletti  
Michelle Colletti

Date: September 20, 2017

Physical Scientist – EPR-4