

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Captain Jack-Olinda Access Road Maintenance

**Project No.:** 3862

**Project Manager:** Randall Browning TELF-TPP-3 Darin Bowman TELF-TPP-3

**Location:** Klamath County, Oregon and Modoc County, California; BPA's Redmond District

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to perform routine road maintenance, repair and improvements on 15,840 linear feet for the Captain Jack-Olinda No. 1 transmission line from structure 1/1 to 7/4. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing infrastructure and roadway safety.

The work would involve the following actions: laying gravel, installing 12 new rock water bars and one new drain dip, repairing 10 water bars, replacing one culvert, and repairing one gate. The roadway improvements would mainly occur within the existing road prism. Erosional rills and other wet season-related damage necessitate the proposed road maintenance work.

The road maintenance activities are proposed to be conducted during 2018. If prior to or during construction activities the proposed action may result in adverse impacts to resources that are not described within this categorical exclusion, coordination with the appropriate agencies and a reevaluation of effects may be warranted.

**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/ John Wiley*

John Wiley

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 20, 2018

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

## Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed work and explains why the work 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

A site evaluation was conducted by an Otak biologist on September 14, 2016. The proposed work is located near the City of Malin, in rural Klamath County, OR and continues south to Modoc County, CA. Land ownership within the work area includes Oregon State lands, and BLM-managed land and privately held property. Land use within the work vicinity includes open space, agriculture and cattle grazing. The approximate site elevation is between 4,350 and 5,100 feet above sea level. The work area is located in Western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) woodland and big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) high desert habitat.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A pedestrian archaeological survey of existing access roads for structures 1/1 to 8/1 on the BPA Captain Jack-Olinda Transmission Line No. 1 in Klamath County, Oregon and Modoc County, California was conducted on October 24-26, 2017 by Heritage Research Associates, Inc. No surface evidence of prehistoric or demonstrably historical cultural materials was found on the survey of access roads for the Captain Jack-Olinda Transmission Line No. 1. No historic properties will be affected by this access road improvement work and no additional archaeological investigations are recommended for this location. OR SHPO concurred with BPA's no adverse effect determination on 4/9/2018.</p> <p>In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during work activities, work in the immediate vicinity would stop, the area would be secured, and the SHPO and the environmental work lead would be notified.</p>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The work includes working within the existing road prism to improve drainage on the road surface by laying gravel, installing 12 new rock water bars and one new drain dip, repairing 10 water bars, replacing one culvert, and repairing one gate. No new ground surface would be disturbed; the work would be limited to the existing road prism. The proposed roadway improvements would likely conserve soil resources by reducing ponding and soil erosion within the roadway. The water bars or drain dips would not connect to other aquatic resources. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. Therefore, the proposed action would have limited impacts to geology and soils.</p>		
<b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed work occurs in rural Klamath County, OR and Modoc County, CA in high elevation Western juniper/sagebrush habitat east of the Cascade Range. Rabbitbrush (<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>), native bunchgrass and cheatgrass (<i>Bromus tectorum</i>) are also dominant in this widespread plant community type typical of the region. Sparse vegetation has established within the roadway in some areas and would be cleared from the road prism where roadwork is proposed. No trees would be removed as a result of the work. Several federally-listed or proposed listed plant species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS are documented to</p>		

occur or have the potential to occur in the region, however, no suitable habitat for special-status plant species were found to occur within the work area. No special-status plant species or their habitats were documented to occur within the vicinity or were observed during the field survey due to lack of suitable habitat. A Letter of No Effect has been completed to document compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and has been submitted under separate cover to BPA. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species and limited impacts to other native and non-native vegetation.

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



Explanation: An official federally-listed species list was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation database (IPaC) on January 29, 2018. Several federally-listed or proposed listed wildlife species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS are documented to occur or have the potential to occur in the region, however, no suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species was found to occur within the work area. The proposed work actions would mainly occur within the existing road prism and any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be temporary in nature and limited to construction within the road prism. See the ESA Letter of No Effect for this work for further details. Therefore, the work would have no impacts to federally-listed wildlife and limited impacts to other wildlife species.

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



Explanation: There are no permanent waterbodies or floodplains present within the proposed work area. Several erosional rills have developed over the roadway over time, but none drain to other aquatic resources outside of the road prism. The work includes replacement of a blocked culvert on an incised channel with an ephemeral flow regime. A rock slide and debris flow buried the culvert inlet, which necessitates its replacement. The drainage originates from a talus field upslope of the access road, and shallow surface flows occur following precipitation events. No in-water work or work that could result in impacts to any waterways is proposed. The work as proposed is exempt from Corps Section 404 and DSL permit applications. Several federally-listed or proposed listed aquatic species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS are documented to occur or have the potential to occur in the region, however, no suitable habitat for special-status aquatic species was found to occur within the work area. The work area is not within range of any species or designate critical habitat under jurisdiction of the NMFS. See the ESA Letter of No Effect for this work for further details. Therefore, the work would have no effect to waterbodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No naturally occurring wetlands are present in the work area or within at least 100-feet to either side of the existing road. Three constructed stock ponds are located in the work vicinity but would not be directly or indirectly impacted. Two of the artificial stock ponds were dry during the field survey. Work would be limited to upland environments. Therefore, the proposed action would have no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted by the proposed work as the work does not include any groundwater withdraws or aquifer recharge areas. The proposed work is limited to shallow soils and previously disturbed areas. There would be no impacts to groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: No change in land use is proposed as part of the work. No specially designated areas were identified within the work limits. The work would not result in changes or impacts to land use or specially designated areas

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There are no residences within visual range of the work limits. The proposed work feature is consistent with existing roads. There would be no impacts to visual resources.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The proposed work is expected to reduce dust generation and improve air quality along the access road by covering exposed soils with a gravel surface layer. Minor vehicle emissions during construction would be temporary in duration.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise generated from construction is expected to be localized and temporary in nature. Construction is expected to last approximately two to four weeks. The current level of road use is not expected to change, and no operational noise increases are expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The work would involve development of a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery in the region. Work activities would not impact human health or safety.

### **Evaluation of Other Integral Elements**

The proposed work would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The work 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**

The Access Road Engineer would contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners prior to work construction.

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

Signed: /s/ John Wiley  
John Wiley EP-4  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: April 20, 2018