

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Applegate Butte Radio Site Access Road Maintenance

Project No.: 395566

Project Manager: Randall Browning – TELF-TPP-3, Access Road Engineer – TFLF-TPP-3

Location: Klamath County, Oregon; 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 the Applegate Butte Radio Site Access Road. BPA is proposing to maintain the dirt/gravel road (Road NF-220) within its existing access right-of-way along its entire 2.5 mile (13,300 ft.) length from Road NF-4518 to the terminus atop Applegate Butte. This work is proposed within the existing roadway prism and traverses U.S. Forest Service property within the Freemont-Winema National Forest. In addition, BPA is proposing a 20-foot x 30-foot gravel landing and a 20-foot x 30-foot equipment pullout/turnaround near the top of Applegate Butte at a sharp turn in the road. Some new ground disturbance outside of the road prism would occur to the outside of this road bend. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing infrastructure and roadway safety and includes the following features:

The project will involve laying gravel, installing 18 rock water bars and 8 drain dips within the existing road prism. Approximately 1,800 square feet will be cleared for a construction landing on a hairpin turn along the existing road. The described road maintenance activities are proposed for construction in 2018-2019 construction season. No in-water work will be conducted.

If prior to or during construction activities additional activities are proposed 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: August 22, 2018

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: Applegate Butte Radio Site Access Road Maintenance Projectd Maintenance Project

Project Site Description

A site evaluation was conducted by an Otak, Inc. biologist on September 13, 2016 to evaluate site conditions and the surrounding environment. The proposed project is located in rural Klamath County, OR. Land ownership within the project area includes U.S Forest Service (USFS) property on the Freemont-Winema National Forest and privately held lands. Land use within the project vicinity includes open space, forested areas, and cattle grazing. The approximate site elevation is between 4,140 and 7,270 feet above sea level. The project area includes the spur road from USFS 9718 to the radio site, which traverses lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*)-dominated coniferous forest habitat at the higher elevations.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> A pedestrian archaeological survey of the work area was conducted on October 18, 2017 by Heritage Research Associates, Inc. No surface evidence of prehistoric or demonstrably historical cultural materials was found. OR SHPO concurred with BPA’s no adverse effect determination on 4/9/18. The Yakama Nation, Umatilla, and Nez Pierce Tribes were consulted and did not provide responses.</p> <p>In the event that archaeological or historical materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity would stop, the area would be secured, and the SHPO and the environmental project lead will be notified.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The project includes laying gravel on an existing road prism and installing eleven rock water bars to improve drainage. 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>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> 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 project. Two federally-listed or proposed listed plant species under jurisdiction of the USFWS are</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

documented to 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 project 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 or their designated critical habitats 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 18, 2018 (updated). 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 project area. The proposed project 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 project for further details. Therefore, the project 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 waterbodies or floodplains present within the proposed work area. Several erosional rills have developed on the existing access road, but they do not drain to other aquatic resources outside of the road prism. Two federally-listed or proposed listed fish species under jurisdiction of the USFWS are documented to occur or have the potential to occur in the region, however, no suitable aquatic habitat for special-status or other fish species were found to occur within the project area due to lack of aquatic 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 aquatic species or their designated critical habitats. The work as proposed is exempt from Corps Section 404 and DSL permit applications. Therefore, the project would have no effect to waterbodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present in the project area or within at least 100-feet to either side of the existing road. No wetlands would be impacted by the proposed project.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted by the proposed project as the project does not include any groundwater withdraws or aquifer recharge 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 project. The project traverses U.S. Forest Service property within the Freemont-Winema National Forest. BPA notified the USFS Freemont-

Winema National Forest District office in May, 2018 regarding the proposed work. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits. The project would not result in changes or impacts to land use or specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



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

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The proposed project is expected to produce brief periods of dust during normal construction activities. Minor vehicle emissions during construction would be temporary in duration. No long-term impacts to air quality will occur.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours is expected. Construction is expected to last less than 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 project would develop 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. Project activities would 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

BPA notified the USFS Freemont-Winema National Forest District office in May, 2018 regarding the proposed work. Further notice to adjacent and potentially affected landowners will occur prior to project construction

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

Signed: /s/ John Wiley
John Wiley
Physical Scientist (Environment)

Date: August 22, 2018