

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Weyerhaeuser Access Road Improvements (LURR 20190157)

Project No.: 20190157

Project Manager: Charlene Belt—TERR-ROSS-MHQA

Location: Skamania County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-ways

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Weyerhaeuser to improve 1.1 miles of an existing access road in BPA's fee-owned right-of-way (ROW) along the North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 transmission line. The improvements would consist of re-grading the surface, widening the road to a maximum of 12-feet across, and adding 2 to 4 inches of compacted gravel. Additionally, BPA would grant Weyerhaeuser the right to haul commercial products, such as timber, on the BPA ROW access road.

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/ Beth Belanger
Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ David K. Kennedy
David K. Kennedy
Executive Manager, Environmental Planning & Analysis

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 11, 2019

Attachment: 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 proposed project is in Skamania County, Washington. The project is occurring in Section 25, Township 2 North, Range 5 East and Section 30, Township 2 North, Range 6 East. The project crosses BPA's fee-owned right-of-way (ROW), which is developed with a transmission line and a dirt access road called Kellett Road. There are approximately twelve residences adjacent to the right-of-way that use Kellett Road to get to their properties. The surrounding area is forested and/or used as timber land.

The site is in the Lower Columbia-Sandy Watershed. An unnamed intermittent stream begins in the southern portion of the ROW and is a tributary to Salmon Creek, which is located 0.2 miles south of the project location.

Vegetation in the project area consists of vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), lupine (*Lupinus* sp.), goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), and scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), among other vegetation.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> On May 7, 2019, Section 106 consultation was initiated with Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). On the same day, DAHP concurred with BPA's Area of Potential Effect (APE) to be surveyed. On May 28, 2019, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe requested that an Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) be included with the project approval. The IDP instructs construction workers on what to do if human remains or archaeological resources are encountered during project activities.</p> <p>On July 25, 2019, BPA sent a no effect determination letter to the consulting parties. On July 29, 2019, DAHP concurred with BPA's no effect determination. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe and the Yakama Nation did not respond.</p> <p>➤ BPA would provide an Inadvertent Discovery Plan to the project proponent.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be used to implement site-specific erosion and sediment control for access road improvements.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Some vegetation would be removed for access road improvements but no Federal/state special-status plants would be impacted.</p>		

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

Explanation: There are no occurrence records of Federal/state special-status species in the project vicinity. Construction activities may temporarily displace non-listed wildlife but there would be no long-term impacts to wildlife.

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

Explanation: BMPs would be used to prevent erosion of soils that could lead to sedimentation of water bodies. There are no floodplains, or fish habitat, in the project area. The project would have no impacts on water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the project area; therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The project is unlikely to impact groundwater and aquifers. Grading activities would have a maximum depth of disturbance of less than one foot.

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

Explanation: The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) borders the project area to the south, but the project is not in the CRGNSA and therefore would not impact it.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The project would not change the visual quality of the location.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

- A speed limit of 10 miles-per-hour would be set to reduce dust levels from commercial truck use of the road.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction and commercial truck traffic noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

- Compression release engine brakes (also known as Jake brakes) would be prohibited.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: Project activities would not impact human health or safety.

- Speed limits of 10 miles-per-hour would be posted along the route, to minimize the potential for collisions with residential traffic.

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: Weyerhaeuser would be required by BPA to notify adjacent landowners that use the right-of-way to access their properties of the timeline of proposed access road improvements and increased commercial truck traffic in the ROW.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger Date: October 11, 2019
Beth Belanger, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC