

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** John Day-Grizzly 500kV No.2 38/1 Impairments

**PP&A No.:** 5080

**Project Manager:** Debbie Miller, TELC-TPP-3

**Location:** Wasco County, Oregon

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to correct one impairment on the John Day-Grizzly 500-kV No. 2 line and provide access road improvements and reconstruction to access the impairment. The impairment encroaches on the maximum allowed distance (MAD) between the John Day-Grizzly conductor and the ground surface. Correction of this impairment is necessary in order to bring the John Day-Grizzly No. 2 line into compliance.

Impairments would be corrected by excavation underneath the line. In locations being excavated, the soil would be placed near the removal area within the existing right-of-way, maintaining similar topography to the surrounding area. In total, the excavation area and volume would be about 0.1 acres in size and 306 cubic yards of material.

BPA is proposing to improve approximately 10,050 feet (1.9 miles) and reconstruct 7,800 feet (1.5 miles) of access road between miles 38 and 40 along the John Day-Grizzly No. 2 that need maintenance for access to the impairment. In addition, 9 rock water bars would be constructed for proper drainage. Road improvements could include the following activities: blading, shaping, grading, brushing, compacting, placing surface rock on to the existing road prisms, and installation and cleaning of drainage structures. General equipment used for these activities include bucket trucks with crane, graders, rollers, bulldozers, excavators, and dump trucks. Geotextile fabric may be added as needed within the road prism for stabilization of road materials. This work is necessary to allow for proper and safe access to the impairment.

In one location, a 2,500 square foot landing would be constructed adjacent to the impairment to allow for any materials or heavy machinery needed for the access road improvement or excavation of the impairment.

Structure	Township, Range, Section	County, State	Ownership
38/1	OR T4S R15E SEC26	Wasco County, Oregon	Private

**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/ Julianna Martin*  
Julianna Martin  
Physical Scientist

Concur:

*/s/ Katey Grange*  
NEPA Compliance Officer      Date: October 3, 2024

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: John Day-Grizzly 500kV No. 2 38/1 Impairment**

### **Project Site Description**

The project would take place along the John Day-Grizzly No. 2 line between structures 38/1 and 38/2. The project area occurs in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion in a semi-arid, shrub and sagebrush dominated landscape. Land uses along the project include rangeland and rural residential. The project is entirely on private land.

### **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

#### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon on May 24, 2024. Oregon SHPO responded via an email dated May 28, 2024, assigning the project SHPO Case No. 24-0972. BPA sent a no effect to historic resources determination on August 19, 2024, and OR SHPO concurred on September 17, 2024. No other responses were received.

Notes:

- If any Post-Review cultural resources are identified during construction, crews are required to stop work within 30 meters of the find and must call the cultural resources lead for appropriate next steps.

#### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include excavation to remove the soil to address the impairment, access road improvement processes such as compaction and the installation of drainage features, and the removal of soil for the creation of a rock landing. Excavated soil to increase the line clearance would be placed adjacent to the removal area, maintaining similar topography to the surrounding area and stabilized. Soil removed for the creation of the landing will be placed adjacent for restoration work at the conclusion of construction.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Vegetation including grasses, forbs, and sagebrush would be crushed or excavated during project construction. In the long term, vegetation would be reestablished with seeding after project construction. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project area, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

Notes:

- BPA would perform seeding during the appropriate time period for germination, with a climate-appropriate native seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise from equipment and human presence during construction. Noise disturbance would be of short duration and any wildlife disturbed would be expected to return to the area quickly after completion. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species present in or near the project area, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present in or near the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are located within the project area.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are located within the project area.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur below local groundwater level. No impacts to groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not change existing land use, nor is the project within a specially designated area.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Areas that would be excavated would be re-contoured to match to the surrounding topography to minimize the long-term visual impact.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project work areas, and there would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work crews would follow appropriate safety precautions. Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

### **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 has consulted with the private landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Juliana Martin  
Julianna Martin, EPR-4  
Physical Scientist

Date: October 3, 2024