

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Santiam-Alvey No. 1, Eugene District, Access Road Maintenance Project

Project No.: PP&A# 3007, WO# 332176

Project Manager: Todd Wehner, Access Road Engineer – TEP-TPP-1

Location: Linn and Lane counties, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):B1.24 Property Transfers (for acquisition only), B1.3 Routine maintenance (for ground work only)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to acquire easements for access to existing transmission facilities where needed. These easement acquisitions would be for existing roads and pathways (e.g., foot trails or agricultural fields) that are typically being used to access BPA facilities for operation and maintenance activities such as routine inspections, equipment repair, and emergency repairs. Upon acquisition, BPA proposes to perform routine road maintenance, repair and improvements on the Santiam-Alvey No. 1 between miles 5 and 62 that are in need of maintenance. The proposed work is necessary to maintain or repair existing infrastructure and roadway safety. The proposed project would include the following features:

- Reconstruction of 8.29 miles of existing access roads (re-shape and rock) and improvement of 4.22 miles of existing access roads (resurface and rock), including associated drainage features (water bars, cross drain culverts, drain dips)
- Install and repair 17 gates
- Construct 1 turn around
- Construct/Improve 24 landings (40' x 40')

Project work includes but is not limited to; grading and shaping of landings and roads, installation of geotextile material, placement of rock on top of geotextile material, compacting road surface, and installation and cleaning of gates and drainage structures.

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/ Philip Smith for
Benjamin J. Tilley
Natural Resource Specialist (Environmental)

Concur:

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

Date: January 17, 2019

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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in rural Linn and Lane counties, Oregon, traversing south from approximately 5 miles south of US Hwy 22 to BPA's Alvey Substation in Goshen, Oregon. Land ownership within the project area is privately held, except for one location in Lane County owned by the BLM. Land use within the project vicinity includes commercial forest, agricultural tree farms, and open pasture. All work locations are in upland areas within the Cascade Mountain Range.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure(s)	Township	County, State	Land Ownership/Use
Santiam-Alvey #1	5\1 – 6\3	10S, 1E, S6 10S, 1W, S1	Linn, OR	Commercial Tree Farm
	21\1 – 21\5	12S, 1W, S 12, 13, 19	Linn, OR	Rural Residential
	26\2 – 27\1	13S, 1W, S7, 18	Linn, OR	Commercial Forestry
	38\5 – 39\2	15S, 1W, S9	Linn, OR	BLM
	45\1 – 47\3	16S, 1W, S7, 18 16S, 2W, S12, 13	Lane, OR	Commercial Forestry
	51\1 – 51\4	17S, 2W, S2, 3	Lane, OR	Rural Residential
	52\3 – 54\6	17S, 2W, S9, 10, 15, 16, 21	Lane, OR	Commercial Forestry
	62\2 – 62\3	18S, 3W, S13, 14	Lane, OR	Rural Residential

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:

Initial Section 106 consultation for this project began in late 2016. Determination letters of a review of historic properties and surveys for archaeological resources were sent to tribes and the Oregon SHPO on October 23, 2016, and December 12, 2007, respectively. No tribes responded. On January 16,

2018, the Oregon SHPO concurred on the lack of potential for adverse effects to archaeological resources.

At tower 6\1 on the Santiam-Alvey #1, previous archaeological surveys noted potential for features due to minor evidence discovered on the surface of the ground and due to an historic cemetery several hundred feet from the right-of-way corridor. An archaeological monitor will be present during work activities in this area as a precaution.

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 would be notified. Work would not commence until the SHPO has cleared the area.

2. **Geology and Soils**



Explanation:

The proposed roadway improvements would likely conserve soil resources by reducing erosion and degradation of the existing dirt/gravel road by channeling surface water runoff to upgraded drainage features. Existing roads currently do not manage water surfaces without erosion. All disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be reseeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region immediately following construction to further stabilize soils. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. Therefore, the proposed action would have limited impacts to geology and soils.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation:

The proposed project is located in rural Linn and Lane counties, Oregon, which is upland coniferous forest habitat. No federal or state special-status plant species have the potential to occur within the project area or in the immediate vicinity due to lack of suitable habitat. No trees would be removed as a result of the project. All disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be reseeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region immediately following construction or during the appropriate seeding window. 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:

No suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species was found to occur within the project area. An official federally-listed species list was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation database (IPaC) on January 11, 2018. No federally-listed or proposed listed species or their designated critical habitats under jurisdiction of the USFWS or NMFS have been documented to occur within the proposed project limits. Therefore, the project would have no impact to special-status wildlife species. The proposed project actions would mainly occur within the existing road prism; therefore, any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be temporary in nature and limited to the construction window. 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 floodplains present within the proposed work area. The project is located in upland forested areas above most seasonal waterways. All cross drains and culverts are for potential seasonal flows. No impacts to watercourses, floodplains, or fish are expected to result from the proposed project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation:

No wetlands are present in the project area or immediately downstream of the proposed work location. Therefore, the project would have no impacts to wetlands.

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.

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



Explanation:

No change in land use is proposed as part of the project. 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 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 reduce dust generation and improve air quality along the rural access road by reducing erosion of the existing roadway. Minor vehicle emissions during construction would be temporary in duration. There would be no impacts to air quality.

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.

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

The Access Road Engineer would contact adjacent and potentially affected landowners 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/ Benjamin Tilley
Benjamin Tilley - EPI-Alvey
Natural Resource Specialist (Environmental)

Date: January 17, 2019