

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Big Cliff-Detroit PH 1&2 No. 1 and No. 2 Emergency Danger Tree Removal

PP&A No.: 4543

Project Manager: Mike Burgan - TFBV-BELL-1

Location: Marion County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to remove a tree that has fallen on the 13.8-kilovolt double-circuit Big Cliff-Detroit PH 1&2 No. 1 and No. 2 transmission lines between structures 1/6 and 1/7. Two types of powered saws (one that cuts vertically and one that cuts horizontally) suspended by a Type III helicopter would be used to perform this operation due to hazardous conditions resulting from fires in the area and steep terrain. A staging area in a lot near the base of Detroit Dam would be temporarily used when switching saws and other pre- and post-flight operations. The work would take place within one day in late September 2020.

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/ Oden Jahn

Oden W. Jahn

Natural Resource Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 24, 2020

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: Big Cliff-Detroit PH 1&2 No. 1 and No. 2 Emergency Danger Tree Removal

Project Site Description

The project area is on a shrub-covered BPA right-of-way (ROW) on a steep slope adjacent to Big Cliff Reservoir. There are patches of burnt vegetation from recent fires in the area. The staging area is located in a lot near the base of Detroit Dam. All project activities and staging would take place on United States Army Corps of Engineers property.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to result in soil disturbances beyond the tree's root ball which was uprooted when the tree fell.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to result in soil disturbances beyond the tree's root ball which was uprooted when the tree fell.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to result in vegetation disturbances beyond the tree's root ball. There are no Federal/state special-status species and habitats known to occur in the project area. Therefore, the proposed action would not affect special-status plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal/state special-status species and habitats known to occur in the project area; therefore, the proposed action would not affect Federal/state special-status wildlife. Non-sensitive wildlife that may utilize the project area could be affected by construction noise, use of equipment, helicopter use, and human activity; however, these impacts would be temporary, would only occur during daylight hours, and habitat would not be modified in a way that would preclude the future use of the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are located in an upland area adjacent to Big Cliff Reservoir. Project activities are not expected to impact waterbodies, floodplains, or listed fish species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are located in an upland area and would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no specially-designated areas in the project vicinity.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would be visible from Highway 22; however, the removal of the tree is not expected to affect visual condition of the right-of-way.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Exhaust from equipment may temporarily reduce air quality in the immediate project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Helicopter and chainsaw noise would be short-duration and would occur on a single day during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel 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: 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: The proposed project is within BPA's ROW easement and consistent with activities typically permitted by easement agreements. BPA coordinated with the US Army Corps of Engineers for the use of the staging area.

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

Signed: /s/ Oden Jahn
Natural Resource Specialist – EPI-4

Date: September 24, 2020