

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Mitigation Area Road Repair

**Project No.:** 1994-044-00

**Project Manager:** Jamie Cleveland, EWU-4

**Location:** Douglas County, Washington

**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 fund the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to repair a section of the Sandhill Road in the Bridgeport Unit of the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Mitigation Area (SFWA) in north central Washington. SFWA lands are owned and managed by WDFW. The proposed repair would ensure safer access and reduce the possibility of further damage or complete failure of the road from spring rains.

The proposed repair would address erosion caused by runoff, which occurred on February 21, 2021, from the drainage area above the project site that is essentially devoid of vegetation due to the September 7, 2020 wildlife fire. WDFW would conduct in-kind repair of the road surface by filling an approximate 70-foot-long by 5-foot-wide by 6-foot-deep crevasse with gravel trucked in, and using a plate compactor mounted to an excavator, compact the fill material in stages to the current grade level. The proposed repair would be conducted as soon as possible and take about a week to complete.

Funding the proposed activity would serve as partial mitigation for the loss of fish and wildlife habitat due to the construction and operation of the Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph Dams on the Columbia River system pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 et seq.).

**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/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

March 31, 2021

Date

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:** Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Mitigation Area Road Repair

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located about 1 mile southwest of Bridgeport, WA, and the Columbia River. The habitat in the area is shrub steppe. The closest body of water is Foster Creek approximately 0.7 miles east and 350 feet below the elevation of the project site. The project area measures about 117 square yards and has a perimeter of 190 feet. Within the boundary, the road is approximately 15 feet wide.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: WA SHPO concurrence on no historic properties affected was received on March 29, 2021 with the stipulation for an unanticipated discovery plan. Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation concurrence on no historic properties affected was received on March 30, 2021.

Notes:

- WDFW would adhere to BPA's Inadvertent Discovery of Cultural Resources Procedures.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soil disturbance is anticipated from the movement of the excavator and compaction of fill material. Proposed activities would occur within previously-disturbed areas and on existing roads and erosion control measures would be used. The proposed road repair would have a long-term positive impact due to decreasing erosion potential.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work area largely does not contain vegetation due to the erosion and previous wild fires. No special-status plant species or habitats are present in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Pygmy rabbit and yellow billed cuckoo have the potential to occur in the project area. Any effects associated to the project are consistent with BPA's Section 7 consultation under the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) biological opinion with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service

(NMFS). Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed by construction noise and increased traffic during locally approved daylight hours. Proposed actions would not disturb any habitat.

Notes:

- WDFW would adhere to all conservation measures for road repair identified in HIP Project Notification Form No. 2021052.

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

Potential for Significance:

Explanation: Project activities would not occur within, adjacent to, or in vicinity of water bodies or conveyances.

**6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would not occur within, adjacent to, or in the vicinity of wetlands.

**7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed activities would not involve depths that would intersect groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no changes to land use, and no impact to specially-designated areas.

**9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No visually prominent vegetative, landform, or structural changes would be made.

**10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary, short-term impacts from construction dust and vehicle emissions would occur during project actions.

**11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary, intermittent noise from construction activities would occur during daylight hours.

**12. Human Health and Safety** Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions are not anticipated to create conditions that would increase the burden on the local health, safety, and emergency-response infrastructure.

### **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: Proposed activities would occur on lands owned and managed by WDFW.

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

Signed: /s/ Brenda Aguirre March 31, 2021  
Brenda Aguirre, ECF-4 Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist