

memorandum

DATE: March 20, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEP-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Dave Forward
Road Designer – TELF-TPP-3

Proposed Action: Libby-Troy Access Road Upgrades

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

Location: Lincoln County, MT

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: Upgrade and improve access roads from Structures 23/3 through 24/6 on the Libby-Troy section of the Libby-Bonnars Ferry No. 1 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line.

Background

This project entails improving the several existing access roads along the Libby-Troy section of the Libby-Bonnars Ferry No. 1 115-kV transmission line. Action locations for project access and road repair activities will include:

- Reconstruct and repair erosion damage to access roads along AXF-21-AR-4.
- Add access road dips and bumps to manage road surface runoff velocities.
- Upgrade rip-rap at the outlet of the Burrell Creek culvert to replace smaller rip-rap that was washed away.

The proposed improvements, reconstruction, and design activities will conform to the design and mitigation requirements as described in the 2009 Rebuild of the Libby-Troy Transmission Line Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0379) and Record of Decision (ROD), July 25, 2008.

The BPA right-of-way was surveyed for cultural resources for the rebuild project in 2009 and cultural resources were found during surveys in the area. No new excavations below the existing fills are anticipated and this work does not represent a significant change in the project design or location which may trigger environmental concerns.

U.S. Forest Service terms used in Grizzly Bear Management areas define a “road” as “all created or evolved routes longer than 500 feet that are reasonably and prudently drivable with a conventional passenger car or pickup”. For the duration of the proposed activities, the Kootenai National Forest is managing AXF-21-AR-4 (Sheep Range Road) as an “open road” which has no

restriction on motorized use. Species timings restrictions will be adhered to for grizzly bear, big horn sheep, bald eagle, and threatened and endangered fish.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a) (1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a) (2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

The proposed project will not affect any listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act, or historic properties under the National Historic Preservation Act.

This proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Kevin George
Kevin George
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur: /s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: March 20, 2013

Attachments:
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Libby-Troy Access Road Upgrades

Work Order #: 317627

This project does **not** have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

| <u>Environmental Resources</u> | <u>No Potential for Significance</u> | <u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u> |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 1) Tribal monitor will be used during construction in all areas west of the USFS gate on the north side of the Kootenai River. | | |
| 2) Comply with road design requirements for cultural resources as specified in the Rebuild of the Libby-Troy Transmission Line Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0379), July 28, 2008. | | |
| 2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Species and habitat will be protected by complying with the following mitigation requirements: | | |
| 1) T & E fish species occur within the project area, work that does occur in water (Burrell Creek) will take place during low flow and when fish are not present in the water body, washed rock will be utilized. | | |
| 2) No use of heavy equipment between April 1 and June 30 (grizzly bear den emergence and spring range period and bighorn sheep lambing season). | | |
| 3) From 21/4-22/4 and 24/8-26/1: No clearing or use of heavy equipment between February 1 to August 15 (bald eagle nesting season). | | |
| 4) No trees are to be cleared with this action potentially. | | |
| 3. Floodplains or wetlands | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| No excess material can be spoiled on the project site. | | |
| 4. Areas of special designation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Sheep Range Road: Use of this road is by "special use" permit and is being managed by the KNF as an "open" road for the duration of construction for the Summer of 2013. | | |
| 5. Health & safety | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Protect open excavations to inadvertent falls by pedestrians and animals. | | |
| 6. Prime or unique farmlands | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Remain on access roads at all times. Use only clearly marked turnarounds along Sheep Range Road. | | |
| 7. Special sources of water | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Utilize non-ground disturbing erosion control BMPs where necessary to protect adjacent water bodies (cultural). | | |
| 8. Other (describe) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 1) BPA shall post notification of work activities prior to construction in the local paper and assure proper pedestrian signage and provisions for pedestrian safety are put into place. | | |
| 2) Where applicable, the mitigation, restoration, and timing requirements as established in the Rebuild of the Libby-Troy Transmission Line Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0379), July 28, 2008 will be adhered to. | | |

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed /s/ Kevin George

Date March 18, 2013

Kevin George, KEP-4