



Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration

U.S. Department of Energy



Proposed Action Title:	Great Cut Pumping Plant Containment Basin Clean-Out
WAPA Region:	Rocky Mountain Region
Location (County/State):	Montezuma County, Colorado
CX Determination Number:	2026-RMR-001 (RMR Project Number: 2025-051)
CX Determination Expiration Date*:	December 31, 2030

**CX is valid until the date above (no longer than five years from when document was signed) or completion of work started prior to the expiration of the CX Determination, unless there are substantial changes to the scope of work, location, or applicable regulations. If such changes occur prior to the expiration of the CX, the Region Environmental Program will review the analysis to ensure the CX is still applicable.*

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to clean out accumulated sediment from the spill containment basin at the Great Cut Pumping Plant in Montezuma County, Colorado. The basin is part of a greater oil spill containment structure within the Great Cut Pumping Plant. The containment structure is in place to contain potential oil spills and prevent the possibility of any spills reaching waters of the United States. The containment basin is located within the footprint of the Great Cut Pumping Plant, to the northwest of the pumping plant building and west of the substation. Over the years, sediment has accumulated in the basin from run-off from the hillside to the west of the basin. There have not been any reported oil spills at the substation and sediment in the basin is free of contaminants. Crews will remove sediment and blend it back into the hillside. The equipment used for this project may include backhoe and an excavator. Cleanout of the basin may occur as often as needed, depending on the rate sediment accumulates within the basin. This CX Determination considers anticipated effects through 2030. Work will be completed within WAPA’s existing right-of-way (ROW) on public lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, San Juan National Forest. The ROW will be accessed by existing access routes; no access road maintenance or new access road construction is authorized. Work may occur at any time prior to the expiration date.

Environmental Requirements during Project Implementation:

- 1) If the scope of work of this project changes, RMR’s Environment Department must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.
- 2) **This Categorical Exclusion expires on December 31, 2030.** If all project work has not been completed by the expiration date, or if the need for an environmental compliance extension is anticipated, RMR’s Environment Department must be contacted for an updated environmental review.
- 3) Any injured or orphaned birds and all observed active nests must be immediately reported to RMR Environment at (970) 593-8803 or (970) 342-6462. Any dead birds must be reported to RMR Environment within twenty-four (24) hours of discovery. Additional documentation, such as photographs and GPS coordinates, may be requested to support RMR’s reporting requirements to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



- 4) If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and an RMR Archaeologist must be contacted immediately at (970) 302-4753, (970) 286-3523, or (970) 658-6794. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR Archaeologist.
- 5) If any possible human remains are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and an RMR Archaeologist must be notified immediately at (970) 302-4753, (970) 286-3523, or (970) 658-6794 (no later than 24 hours from the time of discovery). A reasonable effort must be made to protect the remains from looting and/or further damage. Work in the area of discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by an RMR Archaeologist.
- 6) Activities involving the use of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other petroleum products must comply with RMR's Spill Response Plan (SRP).
- 7) Per the Operations Plan for Western Area Power Administration Rocky Mountain Region Electrical Facilities Located on National Forest System-managed Lands, the following design features (DFs) and standard maintenance practices (SMPs) will be implemented when working on lands managed by the USFS:

WAPA Design Features (DFs)	
DF Number	Description
1	WAPA shall use practical methods and devices that are reasonably available to minimize emissions of air contaminants. This includes particulates from soil disturbance, excessive exhaust from internal combustion engines, etc.
2	Equipment and vehicles that show excessive emissions of exhaust gases due to poor engine adjustments, or other inefficient operating conditions, shall not be operated until corrective repairs or adjustments are made.
3	Use reasonably available methods to prevent or control emissions of dust and fumes to the air. Dust shall be controlled in areas where nuisance dust could disturb nearby residences, public activities, or other sensitive resources, or where local or state air quality regulations require it. Vehicles and other equipment with internal-combustion engines must be maintained and tuned to limit emissions of fumes and particulates.
4	Activities shall be conducted to minimize scarring or defacing of the natural surroundings in the vicinity of the work.
5	Operate heavy equipment only when soil moisture is below the plastic limit or protected by at least 1 foot of packed snow or 2 inches of frozen soil. Soil moisture exceeds the plastic limit if the soil can be rolled into a 3-millimeter (0.12-inch) thread without breaking or crumbling.
9	All scarification and other site preparation work should be laid out with the terrain contour.
10	Restrict roads, landings, skid trails, concentrated-use sites and similar soil disturbances to permitted areas.
14	Equipment staging areas and refueling locations will be at least 250 feet away from streams and wetlands. Spill prevention and containment measures will be used at all staging areas and refueling locations.

WAPA Standard Maintenance Procedures (SMPs)	
SMP Number	Description
A-1	Do not use equipment that has excessive exhaust emissions because they are in need of repair.
S-1	Minimize maintenance in wet periods and on wet soils to prevent excessive rutting, erosion, and compaction.
W-2	All spills will be cleaned up immediately. There will be no refueling, chemical storage, or chemical mixing near (e.g., less than 250 feet) surface water.
B-4	Report mortalities or injuries of any protected wildlife species that occurs as a result of maintenance activities to WAPA or Forest Service biologist.
C-3	Before beginning project activities, project personnel will be instructed on the protection of cultural and environmental resources. The information will address (a) federal and state laws regarding antiquities and plants and wildlife, including disturbance, collection, and



	removal, (b) the importance of these resources and the purpose and need to protect them, and (c) avoidance areas and special precautions.
G-1	Limit the movement of crews and equipment to ROWs, including access routes, when practical.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied (Number and Title):

B1.3 Routine maintenance

B1.6 Tanks and equipment to control runoff and spills

Findings:

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see 10 CFR 1021.102 and Appendix B to [10 CFR Part 1021](#), and also Section 5.4 (Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of [DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures](#) (Jun. 30, 2025).

Requirements and guidance in 10 CFR 1021.102 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures: (See full text in regulation and in Implementing Procedures)

- The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B or C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures. Additionally, for CXs adopted pursuant to NEPA Section 109 (see DNIP, Appendix C), the originating Federal agency's integral elements or extraordinary circumstances must be in accordance with the applicable requirements.

- There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. DOE or an applicant may modify the proposal to avoid reasonably foreseeable adverse significant effects such that the categorical exclusion would apply.

- The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

[Note: For proposals that fit within the categorical exclusions listed in Appendix C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, see DOE's notice of adoption for the subject Appendix C categorical exclusion for additional considerations. DOE notices of adoption for other agency categorical exclusions may be found on [DOE's Section 109 webpage](#).]



Determination:

Based on my review of the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

WAPA Authorized Official Signature:

James Wood, Regional Environmental Manager
Rocky Mountain Region
Western Area Power Administration