



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: Tucson-Apache 115-kV Transmission Line, Access Road Repairs Mile 14 to 20

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration, Desert Southwest Regional Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Tucson, Pima County, Arizona

Proposed Action Description:

Western proposes to conduct access road repairs along the existing Tucson-Apache 115-kV transmission line in Pima County, Arizona. The project is Township 15 South, Range 14 East, sections 31 and 32; and Township 16 South, Range 14 East, Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, and 12 (Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian) on private lands. The road segment needing repair is located between South Nogales Highway and Wilmot Road in Tucson, Arizona, between transmission structures 14-2 and 20-3. Due to heavy rains and runoff, the dirt access roads in the project area have become eroded and are currently not in safe condition for maintenance vehicles. The purpose of the project is to ensure that the roads are in appropriate condition for year-round access to transmission lines by maintenance and inspection crews.

Repair activities will include grading the road and using native surface material to smooth and fill eroded areas and washouts. Access road repairs will be conducted using graders, bulldozers, and small track vehicles (e.g. bobcats). Access roads are approximately 16 feet wide.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.3 - Routine maintenance

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of [10 CFR Part 1021](#).

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) 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; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) 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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: *Shirley Manto*

Date Determined: 11.14.14

Tucson-Apache 115-kV Transmission Line
Access Road Repairs Mile 14 to 20
Categorical Exclusion Continuation Sheet

Special Conditions

1) BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a) *Saguaros and agaves*: Saguaros and agaves will be left in place and undisturbed wherever possible. Saguaros will be topped as opposed to removing the entire plant wherever possible. Small saguaros (less than 10 feet tall) and agave which cannot be avoided will be replanted outside of the impact area.
- b) *Pre-construction clearance survey*: No more than 7 days prior to project activities, a Biological Monitor will survey the project area for native nesting birds, PPC, and desert tortoise burrows. The Biological Monitor will provide these survey results in a memo to Western prior to the onset of project activities, with any appropriate recommendations to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources.
- c) *Biological Monitor*: Due to the possibility that Pima pineapple cactus (PPC) or desert tortoise may be found within the project area, a Biological Monitor will be present during all project activities that have potential to disturb soil or vegetation in desertscrub habitat, based on the pre-construction clearance survey (b, above). The Biological Monitor will be authorized by Western to temporarily halt project activity if needed to prevent potential harm to PPC, desert tortoise, or native nesting birds. The work supervisor will coordinate with the Biological Monitor on planned or ongoing activities in desertscrub habitat and any specific monitoring requirements for each activity in those areas.
- d) *Desert tortoise*: If at any time tortoise are seen within or near any work area, the Biological Monitor and project supervisor will be immediately notified; project activities will stop and the tortoise will be allowed to move away on its own or be moved out of harm's way to adjacent habitat. Anyone moving tortoise shall notify Western Environmental Affairs, and shall strictly adhere to AGFD's *Guidelines for Handling Sonoran Desert Tortoises*.
- e) *Nesting birds*: To avoid disturbance to nesting birds, project activities will be scheduled between September 1 and February 15, as feasible. Project activities taking place between February 15 and August 31 will be subject to pre-construction surveys by the Biological Monitor prior to beginning work. Project activities may not disturb an active bird nest. If an active bird nest is located on or adjacent to the project area, the Biological Monitor (above) will designate and flag an appropriate buffer area around the nest where activities will not be permitted. The buffer area will be based on the bird species and nature of project activity.

- f) *Pima Pineapple Cactus*: Implementation of the following conservation measures are required in order to minimize project related impacts to PPC, vegetation, and PPC habitat:
 - i) *Fencing*: The Biological Monitor will install temporary fencing will be placed around all PPC located within the project work areas to provide increased visibility and protection during project activities. All fencing will be removed following completion of the project. Fencing will be a minimum of a 20-foot diameter around the PPC.
 - ii) *Monitoring*: A Biological Monitor will be present during project activities in occupied PPC habitat, generally for work activities within 100 feet of PPC stems.
 - iii) *Avoid spreading/introducing invasive plant species*: Western will wash all off-road vehicles and maintenance equipment before entering public lands at Western's storage facility. Western will inspect and clean all vehicles and equipment removing dirt and plant parts from equipment when leaving each pole replacement work site.

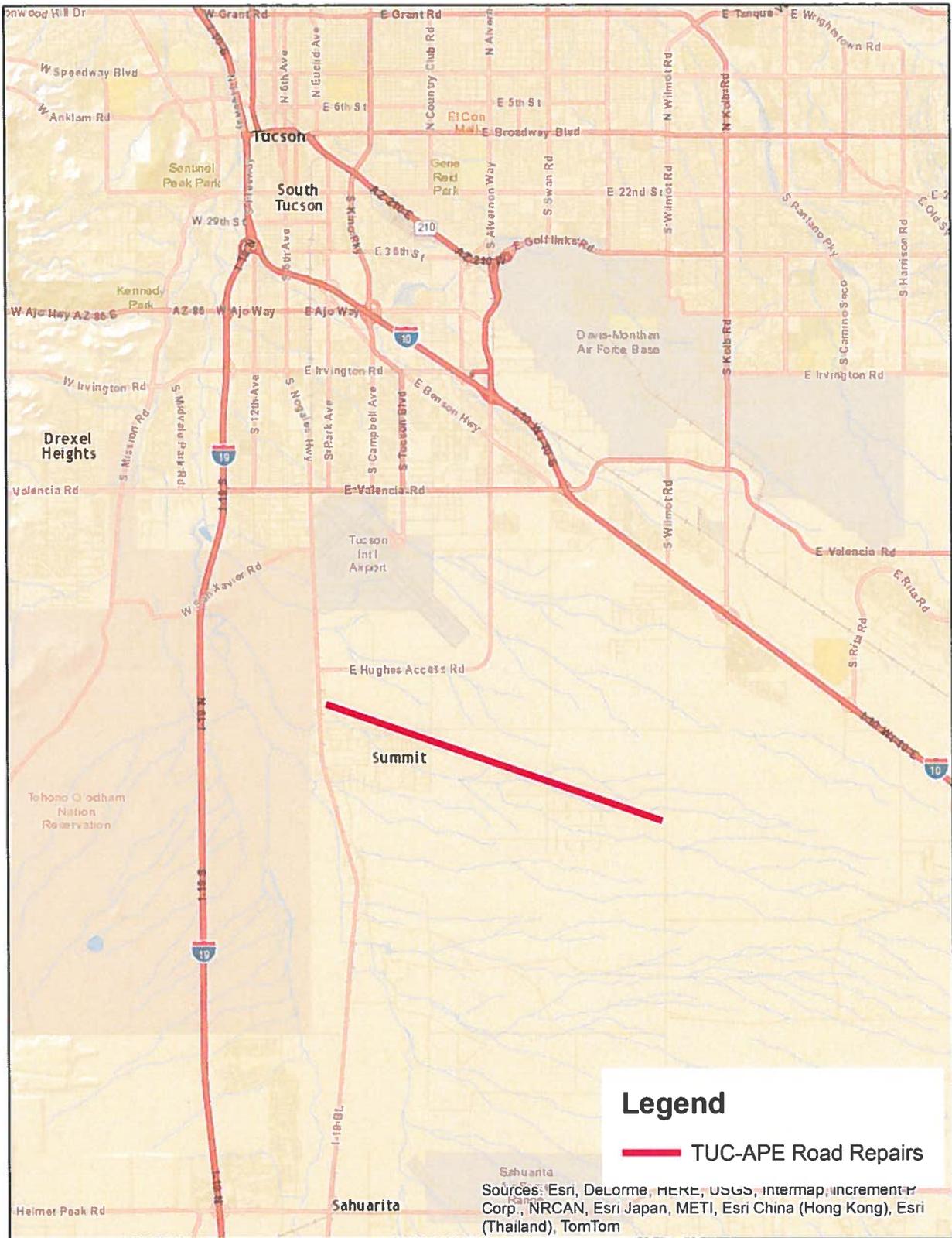
2) CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a) *Cultural Awareness and Monitoring*: A Cultural Monitor shall flag sensitive cultural resource areas for avoidance and monitoring.
- b) In the event of archaeological discoveries or discoveries of human remains during ground-disturbing activities, these activities much cease in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and Western's archaeologist (602-605-2842) must be notified immediately. If human remains are found on federal lands, the federal land-managing agency must also be notified immediately, followed by written notification of the discovery of human remains to the agency with 24 hours. Western's archaeologist, and the federal land managing agency's archaeologist, will consult with the Arizona SHPO and tribes to determine the appropriate course of action.

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A or B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B. :	NO	YES	UNKNOWN
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;	X		
(3) 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;	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive	X		

resources include, but are not limited to:				
(i)	Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(ii)	Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii)	Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv)	Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v)	Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor;	X		
(vi)	Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii)	Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests.; or	X		
(5)	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.	X		



Tucson-Apache 115-kV Road Repairs