

# CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



Western Area  
Power Administration  
Rocky Mountain Region

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**Proposed Action Title: Shiprock Substation Access Road Maintenance**

**Location: San Juan County, New Mexico**

**Project Number: 2024-020**

**Expiration Date: December 31, 2029**

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## **A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:**

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), proposes to conduct routine access road maintenance on the existing graveled access road to the Shiprock Substation (RD 6893), located in Sections 24, 25, 26, and 35, Township 30 N, Range 16 W, NMP, San Juan County, New Mexico. Access road maintenance would consist of watering and blading the entire road, and then rolling the entire road with a compactor. WAPA may also apply magnesium chloride or calcium chloride to the road to help with dust control and aggregate stabilization, and thus help reduce the frequency of road maintenance. This access road maintenance is expected to be repeated at least 1-2 times per year, or as often as necessary to maintain the road in a safe, acceptable condition. WAPA expects the work to take no longer than one week each time maintenance is required. Heavy equipment used to complete this project would include an excavator, motor grader, dump truck, and water truck. All work would be restricted to the existing road on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). No new roads would be constructed.

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## **B. STIPULATIONS PERTAINING TO PROPOSAL:**

- 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, 2029.** 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) **The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concurred that this activity may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the threatened Mesa Verde cactus. The following Conservation Measures are required:**
  - a. **Roadwork activities must be restricted to the existing road;**
  - b. **Roadwork must include watering the road prior to blading to minimize dust generation;**
  - c. **WAPA must avoid conducting roadwork during the May 1 to July 15 Mesa Verde cactus reproductive (flowering) season whenever possible;**
  - d. **When roadwork must be completed between May 1 and July 15, WAPA must only conduct roadwork when wind speeds are less than 5 miles per hour; and**
  - e. **WAPA staff involved in roadwork activities must be provided avoidance maps to ensure there is no accidental entrance into the boundaries of Mesa Verde cactus monitoring plots (contact J0400 for additional copies of avoidance maps).**

- 4) **The BLM requests notification prior to roadwork, to monitor burrowing owl and Mesa Verde cactus habitat. To coordinate monitoring, contact the BLM Farmington Field Office Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species Program Wildlife Biologist at least two weeks prior to each roadwork occurrence. Biologist contact information has been provided to WAPA staff involved in roadwork activities.**
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Vehicles and equipment (trailers, trucks, UTVs, etc.) will not be moved between work areas without first taking reasonable measures to ensure they are free of soil, seeds, vegetation matter, or other debris that could contain noxious weed seeds.
- 9) Activities involving the use of fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other petroleum products must comply with RMR's Spill Response Plan (SRP).

**C. NUMBER AND TITLE OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION BEING APPLIED:**

(See text in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D.)

B1.3 Routine maintenance

**D. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):** (See full text in regulation)

The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B of 10 CFR 1021.



To fit within the classes of actions listed in 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 the Department of Energy (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 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (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 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 of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

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 improperly segmented, and the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

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## E. DETERMINATION:

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) concerning 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.

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Signature and Date

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

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