Categorical Exclusion Determination
Western Area Power Administration
U.S. Department of Energy

Proposed Action Title:	Malin-Round Mountain Off-ROW Hazard Trees
WAPA Region:	Sierra Nevada Region
Location (County/State):	Modoc, Shasta, and Siskiyou Counties, California
CX Determination Number:	2026-SNR-012
CX Determination Expiration Date*:	12/31/2028

**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, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of several federally owned and operated transmission lines throughout California, including Malin-Round Mountain 500 kV located in Modoc, Shasta, and Siskiyou Counties, California. This responsibility includes ensuring WAPA maintains reliable access to transmission towers and other facilities to comply with the National Electric Safety Code, Western States Coordinating Council, and WAPA directives for protecting human safety and maintaining the reliable operation of the transmission system.

WAPA proposes to remove up to 149 trees outside the Malin-Round Mountain 230 kV transmission line rights of way (ROWs). The land is owned by the U.S. Forest Service, and private landowners. The hazard trees are located outside, but adjacent to the right of way (off-ROW) and have the potential to fall on, grow into, or otherwise compromise the integrity of the transmission line. WAPA Order 450.3A dictates the removal of trees in compliance with the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) Standard FAC-003-1. WAPA has limited what meets hazard standards. Trees will only be removed using chainsaws and hand tools. They will be felled and left onsite, limbs will be chipped and broadcast. Lop and scatter debris will not exceed 12 inches in height. Trees will be removed November 1– December 31, which is outside of northern spotted owl breeding and nesting season. Cultural resources will be flagged and avoided by using hand tools only and the project will avoid ground disturbance.

Environmental Requirements during Project Implementation:

Cultural Resources

- Monitor required.
- If cultural or paleontological materials are identified during implementation, halt work within a 100-foot buffer of the discovery and contact the SNR Archaeologist immediately.

Biological Resources:

- For NSO, PCM-BO79 applies: From February 1 to July 31 herbicide application (with the exception of direct application), tree removal, and any noisy or disturbing O&M activities (e.g., chain saw, mechanical chipper) will be prohibited. O&M activities that only require the use of hand tools and pickup trucks are allowable within this time frame.
- B-SOP-12 applies: To protect nesting birds (birds not specifically protected by PCMs but protected by the **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**), whose nests could occur within the ROW, Western and its subcontractors will perform Category B&C O&M activities outside the nesting season, which runs from Jan 1 through September 15 in the Redding/Trinity and Round Mountain/Modoc regions. Alternatively, a qualified biologist will conduct nesting-bird surveys prior to project activities. For special-status birds, see specific PCMs. An additional survey may be required if gaps between the survey and the project activity exceed three weeks.
- PCM-B070 applies: From February 1 to August 15 herbicide application or noisy or disturbing O&M activities (e.g., power saws, mechanical chippers) will be prohibited anywhere that bald eagles are known to nest OR a qualified biologist4 will conduct nesting surveys using methods described in Jackman and Jenkins 2004. If a nest is detected, all herbicide application and O&M activities will be prohibited at a distance determined by the qualified biologist, based on topography and/or other environmental considerations.

Water Resources:

- WR-SOP-1 Non-biodegradable debris will not be deposited in the ROW.
- WR-SOP-2 Run-off from project worksites will be controlled and will meet the State Water Resources Control Board storm water requirements.
- WR-SOP-3 Vehicles will be inspected daily for fluid leaks before leaving the staging area.
- WR-SOP-4 Equipment will be stored, fueled, and maintained in a vehicle staging area 300 feet or the maximum distance possible from any seep, spring, pond, lake, river, stream, marsh, or their associated habitats.
- WR-SOP-5 Basal and foliar application of herbicides will be prohibited. Only direct application treatments, (e.g. injection and cut-stump) of target vegetation will be allowed using herbicide approved for aquatic use by the U.S. EPA and in coordination with the appropriate federal or private land manager.
- WR-SOP-6 When feasible, all maintenance activities will be routed around wet areas while ensuring that the route does not cross sensitive resource areas.
- WR-SOP-7 Basal and foliar application of herbicides will be prohibited. Only direct application treatments, (e.g. injection and cut-stump) of target vegetation will be allowed using herbicide approved for aquatic use by the U.S. EPA and in coordination with the appropriate federal or private land manager.
- WR-SOP-8 The following activities are prohibited at all times within 100 feet of a seep, spring, pond, lake, river, stream, or marsh, and their associated habitats:
    - Vehicle access, except on existing access and maintenance roads
    - Dumping, stockpiling, or burying of any material
    - Mixing of pesticides, herbicides, or other potentially toxic chemicals

- Open petroleum products

Specially Designated Areas:

- SDA-SP-1 All felling, staging, and equipment operations will remain within the boundaries set by the map book defining the project location.
- SDA-SP-2 All hazard tree removal activities will comply with Modoc National Forest land management conditions and in accordance with USFS and BLM coordination.

Air Quality:

- AQ-SOP-1 Western will adhere to all requirements of those agencies having jurisdiction over air quality matters, and any necessary permits for operation and maintenance will be obtained.
- AQ-SOP-2 Machinery and vehicles will be kept in good operating condition and older equipment will be replaced with equipment meeting more stringent California emission standards; appropriate emissions-control equipment will be maintained for vehicles and equipment, per California, EPA, and Western air-emission requirements.
- AQ-SOP-3 Idle equipment will be shut down when not in active use; visible emissions from stationary generators will be controlled.
- AQ-SOP-4 Dust-control measures will be implemented in road construction and maintenance, as needed. Trucks transporting loose material will be covered or maintain at least 2 feet of freeboard and will not create any visible dust emissions.
- AQ-SOP-5 There will be no open burning of construction trash.
- Q-SOP-6 Major operations will be avoided on days when the local Air Quality Index is expected to exceed 150.

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

B1.3 Routine maintenance

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 (July 13, 2026).

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.

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:

KRISTEN DALLDORF Digitally signed by KRISTEN DALLDORF
Date: 2026.10.30 08:27:06 -07'00'

Title: Sierra Nevada Region Environmental Manager