

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Elochoman 3 Property Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Project No.: 2010-073-00; BPA-009578

Project Manager: Anne Creason

Location: Wahkiakum County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund Columbia Land Trust to purchase three properties that include Oxbow, Steelhead, and Powerline totalling 123.56-acres located approximately 1 mile north of Cathlamet, Washington in Wahkiakum County. BPA would hold a conservation easement to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat. The Columbia Land Trust would lease the Powerline property for temporary cattle grazing following closing to control invasive species. BPA would also provide stewardship funds toward maintenance of the property to the landowner, Columbia Land Trust.

The funding would be provided as part of BPA's ongoing efforts to protect, restore, and enhance habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead. The acquisition would support efforts to mitigate for the effects of development and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries under the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 in a manner consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's Columbia River estuary mitigation commitments in its record of decision to implement the 2008 National Marine Fisheries Service's Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion.

The property consists of riparian and floodplain habitat within the Lower Elochoman River that will benefit all species of juvenile salmon and steelhead. The Columbia Land Trust would develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) 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), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Travis Kessler

Travis Kessler
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad J. Hamel

Chad J. Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 11, 2019

Attachment(s):

Environmental Checklist
Public Notification Map

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Elochoman 3 Property Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Project Site Description

The Elochoman 3 project includes three properties that include Oxbow, Steelhead, and Powerline totalling 123.56-acre that are currently privately owned and BPA would fund its purchase by Columbia Land Trust at closing. The Elochoman 3 properties include riparian and floodplain habitat within the Lower Elochoman River that will benefit all species of juvenile salmon and steelhead. The properties are located Wahkiakum County, Washington.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect based on a letter from DAHP received on November 20, 2018, that concurred with BPA's determination that none of the buildings on the property are eligible and that no historic properties would be affected. In addition, there would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that Columbia Land Trust would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Notification letters would be sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties at a minimum of 15 days before the closing date (proposed closing date February 8, 2019) of the sale. Advertisements will also be posted in local newspapers, and information will be posted on BPA's public website prior to closing.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Travis Kessler
Travis Kessler, ECF-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Date: February 11, 2019