

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Yankee Fork Restoration Survey Activities

**Project No.:** 2002-059-00

**Project Manager:** Jennifer Lord

**Location:** Custer County, Idaho

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Shoshone-Bannock Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (SBT) to implement various ongoing survey activities consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. Activities would include the collection of data at restoration sites and control (unrestored) sites in the basin.

Monitoring supports and complements in-stream restoration work managed by Trout Unlimited under this project, 2002-059-00. Continued monitoring of restoration sites within the Yankee Fork basin provides tools for managers to determine the effectiveness of the fish habitat restoration projects and helps inform future restoration needs.

The proposed actions include:

Fish, hydrologic, and geomorphologic surveys: Installing stream gauges and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag arrays at previously-established locations; conducting snorkel surveys; conducting site assessments (e.g. pebble counts, elevation surveys, photo points); water quality (water temperatures, pH, specific conductivity, turbidity, dissolved oxygen); discharge measurements; and invertebrate sampling.

These actions would specifically satisfy some of BPA's Columbia River tributary mitigation commitments begun under the 2008 NMFS' Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion (as supplemented in 2010 and 2014) (2008 BiOp) and ongoing commitments under the 2019 NMFS' Columbia River System BiOp (2019 CRS BiOp).

**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, Jul. 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/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient/CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Signed: /s/ Sarah T. Biegel July 1, 2020  
Sarah T. Biegel Date  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# 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:** Yankee Fork Restoration Survey Activities

## **Project Site Description**

All activities would occur within the Yankee Fork basin in Custer County, Idaho. The land is under either private ownership or managed by the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA archeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these types of activities are covered under an existing Section 106 consultation and Programmatic Agreement with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office. In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped immediately and a BPA Archaeologist and Historian would be notified, as well as consulting parties.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary impact to soils and geology during activities may occur.

### **3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities may have minor, temporary effects on plants as surveys are conducted and data are collected. In addition, Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plants or Federal or state special-status species and habitats are not in the immediate project areas and activities would result in no effect determination or would be low risk according to the current programmatic biological opinion issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the effects of BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP).

Notes:

- SBT would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified.

### **4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities may have minor, temporary effects on wildlife and macroinvertebrates, including ESA-listed wildlife or Federal or state special-status species and habitats. However, project activities would result in a no effect determination or would

be low risk according to the current biological opinion issued by the USFWS on the effects of BPA's HIP.

Notes:

- SBT would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified, including, but not limited to, HIP conservation measures or other mitigation measures (e.g., construction or vegetation removal restrictions under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or Migratory Bird Treaty Act).

**5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities may impact water quality; however, these effects to water bodies would be minimal; limited to temporary, low level turbidity. There would be no net rise in floodplain elevations. Actions would have no effect or be classified as low risk to fish species. This is also documented for ESA-listed species in the current programmatic biological opinion issued by the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service on the effects of BPA's HIP.

Notes:

- SBT would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified, including, but not limited to, HIP conservation measures or other mitigation measures.

**6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities are not expected to impact wetlands near the project sites.

**7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities would not impact groundwater or aquifers at the project sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities would not change land use or specially-designated areas.

**9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Visual quality of immediate project areas may be temporarily impacted during project activities due to equipment staging and personnel conducting surveys.

**10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Air quality may be impacted by the additional travel to project sites, but impacts would be local and temporary in nature.

**11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Survey activities would not be distinguishable from ambient noise levels.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety regulations would be followed during work activities

### **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: N/A

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

Explanation: N/A

**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: N/A

**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: N/A

### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: The private and public (Salmon-Challis National Forest) landowners have been notified and approve of all survey activities as described for this project.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran 07/01/2020  
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient/CRGT