

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Deschutes River Fall Chinook Research and Monitoring

Project No.: 2008-306-00

Project Manager: Corrie Veenstra, EWM-4

Location: Jefferson, Sherman, Wasco counties, Oregon

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 proposes to fund the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon's ongoing research and monitoring of Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*). This research is in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The proposed actions would include:

1. Operation, maintenance, and data collection at the preexisting Passive Integrated Transponder arrays located at the mouth of the Deschutes River and Sherars Falls
2. Assist ODFW staff with data collection and mark-recapture studies of returning fall Chinook at Sherars Falls.
3. Conduct carcass surveys.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with National Marine Fisheries Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System and Bonneville's commitments to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs under the 2020 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the FCRPS on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 et seq.).

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:

/s/ Katey C. Grange August 16, 2021

Katey C. Grange 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: Deschutes River Fall Chinook Research and Monitoring

Project Site Description

All activities would occur within the Deschutes River subbasin in Jefferson, Sherman, and Wasco counties, Oregon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, actions proposed by this project would not impact historic or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, geology and soils would not be impacted by the proposed activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project and there are no anticipated impacts to any plant species, and none exist within the immediate area of impact.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The actions would not impact wildlife within the project area and there would be no effect.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project personnel assist ODFW with their data collection during mark-recapture efforts and would not handle any fish species. The activities would not impact wetlands

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, activities would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact or change land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Air quality may be affected by emissions and dust from vehicular travel to project locations.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise levels would not be impacted by the work.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Safety regulations would be followed as necessary.

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: This work would be implemented in coordination with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on Oregon State lands.

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

Israel Duran, ECF-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT

August 16, 2021

Date