

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Hidaway Creek Restoration

Project No.: 2000-031-00

Project Manager: Jesse Wilson – EWL-4

Location: Umatilla County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Confederated tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to implement the Hidaway Creek Restoration to address degraded habitat and function. The Hidaway Creek Restoration site encompasses about 17.5 acres of floodplain and stream channel habitat on private land along 1.8 miles of lower Hidaway Creek between RM 0.5 and 2.3, and is located approximately eight miles east of Ukiah, Oregon in Umatilla County. This project is expected to benefit ESA-listed steelhead trout (*Onchorhynchus mykiss*), bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and non-listed species such as Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytcsha*), Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*), and mussels (Unionidae) and their habitat. Work is expected to start with tree harvest in fall 2021, and in-water work would be implemented during the following in-water work window (July 15-August 15).

Restoration objectives developed for this effort are centered on improving floodplain connectivity, frequency of inundation, in-stream habitat complexity, and off-channel habitat conditions closer to those of natural form. The addition of instream complexity afforded by large wood placements would inherently decrease channel volume and increase flow velocity complexity resulting in more connected floodplains and site appropriate sediment mobilization/deposition.

Proposed treatments include approximately:

- 57 wood sweeper structures to deflect flows and create scour.
- 27 wood apex structures to increase channel complexity by splitting flows.
- 27 wood channel spanning structures to break up long riffles.
- 13 flow constriction structures to encourage scour on the outside of meander bends.
- 50 near-bank structures to decrease active channel width and encourage localized scour
- 22 post assisted log structures (PALS) to increase channel complexity
- Supplement 10 naturally occurring large wood features to improve their function during all flows

- Plant 684 native hardwoods and seed disturbed areas with native grasses.

Timber on adjacent hillslopes requires thinning and is, therefore, a convenient and useful source of material from land management and aquatic restoration standpoint and most of the wood for habitat structures is expected to come from this source. Cut wood from adjacent upslope areas would be pulled to the restoration sites using a skidder/forwarder. If there is not enough material from the thinning, additional logs would be purchased from offsite resources.

Most of the instream wood treatments would be comprised of small- and medium-sized wood with few pieces of large wood used to ballast the channel spanning structures and flow constrictors. Wood would be placed with heavy equipment on top of the banks and in the channels and would not require bank excavation for placement. Some structures would use heavy equipment to drive posts to pin down those structures.

Existing access roads on the property would be used to access the restoration site and temporary access may be required between the existing access road and some of the treatment areas. Wood and equipment staging would occur at existing roadbeds at two stations, 4+75 and 12+50, located on east and west sides of Hidaway Creek.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with National Marine Fisheries Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System and Bonneville's commitments to the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation 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 June 24, 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: Hidaway Creek Restoration

Project Site Description

The Hidaway Creek Restoration site encompasses 17.5 acres of floodplain and stream channel habitat on private land along 1.8 miles of lower Hidaway Creek between RM 0.5 and 2.3, and is located approximately eight miles east of Ukiah, Oregon in Umatilla County. The primary purpose of this effort is to increase stream channel and floodplain complexity in a reach heavily influenced by past timber harvest and cattle grazing. Current habitat conditions limit the presence and productivity of native species.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA submitted a determination of No Historic Properties Affected under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (BPA Cultural Resources Project Number OR 2018 151) on February 12, 2021. Consulting parties included the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (OR SHPO). BPA received concurrence from the OR SHPO on March 17, 2021. No other responses were received as part of BPA's consultation efforts.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance during construction would be temporary and stabilized with post-construction revegetation. Some wood structures are expected to cause additional scour, while others may collect sediment. No long-term adverse effects are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ESA-listed or sensitive plant species present in the project area. Short-term negative impacts to vegetation from heavy equipment use would result in soil being turned and plants being uprooted, buried, or torn apart. The project is designed to minimize impacts to native vegetation. Riparian vegetative communities would be restored through seeding and planting native species in disturbed areas following project implementation. The project would have short-term effects on vegetation from construction actions, but in the long term, there would be beneficial effects, including increased riparian habitats and restored or improved vegetative conditions.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area has the potential to contain habitat for ESA-listed gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) (USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), 2021), but based on habitat characteristics and species distribution, the project would have no effect on ESA-listed species. There would be no effect to other sensitive wildlife species. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed by construction activities; however, displacement would be short term. Improved habitat conditions would result in long-term positive impacts, including increased plant species richness and diversity, increased habitat structural diversity, and increased habitat heterogeneity.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Hidaway Creek is designated Critical Habitat for bull trout and may contain ESA-listed steelhead and bull trout. BPA performed a technical and functional review of the project designs and approved them on October 11, 2021. ESA consultations with NMFS and the USFWS on BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) were completed on August 12, 2020 (PNF #2021036). The proposed action would result in long-term positive impacts to ESA-listed species and other local fish species by providing habitat for fish species during all flow conditions. Work area isolation would be used in areas with water; no direct effects to salmonids as a result of construction are anticipated. Fish salvage, which could cause a direct effect to fish, would be performed prior to establishing the temporary cofferdams for the side channel excavation.

Notes:

- The Confederated tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation would adhere to the conservation measures required under the ESA consultations with NMFS and the USFWS on BPA's HIP to minimize impacts to ESA-listed fish during project implementation. These measures include isolating work from waters and designing large wood placements to mimic natural processes and functions.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Jurisdictional wetlands are not present in or near the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The placement of log structures in the channel may result in minor impacts to groundwater by encouraging greater amounts of water onto the floodplain during high flows. The long-term increase in floodplain access would benefit groundwater recharge and function.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no known special uses for the property. Existing land use would not change as a result of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minimal impact to visual quality during construction. However, the project would contribute to the natural appearance of the property once vegetation and structures become established.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Equipment emissions and upturned dust would result in short-term impacts to air quality. These would be temporary and localized in nature and would not have long-term impacts on air quality. Implementation of the proposed action is not expected to generate long-term or short-term violations of state air quality standards.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The use of heavy equipment during project implementation would result in temporary, localized noise increases. These increases would not substantially impact the surrounding environment.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety standards would be followed.

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 project has been developed with guidance and permission of the landowner.

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 June 24, 2021
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT