

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Inspection, Maintenance, and Monitoring on ODFW Projects in Grande Ronde and Umatilla Basins

Project No.: 1984-025-00

Project Manager: Tracy Hauser

Location: Grande Ronde and Umatilla Basins within Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 – Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action:

BPA proposes to continue funding the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for ongoing vegetation management and routine maintenance work throughout the Grande Ronde and Umatilla Basins. The Grande Ronde and Umatilla Fish Habitat Improvement Program supports ODFW's efforts to restore riparian and instream habitats in the Grande Ronde and Umatilla Basins as mitigation for fisheries losses resulting from the development of the Federal Columbia River Power System. The Program's focus is on the protection, enhancement, and restoration of habitats utilized by Federal Endangered Species Act-listed Umatilla River summer steelhead, Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon, and Snake River summer steelhead, while benefitting many other species of fish and wildlife. These activities are guided, in part, by Recovery Plans, Subbasin Plans, Oregon plans and policies, and current research.

The primary goal of "The Grande Ronde & Umatilla Basin Fish Habitat Enhancement Project" is to create, protect, and restore riparian and instream habitat ecosystems for anadromous salmonids, including flow restoration and passage improvement. These activities fulfill commitments that began 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).

Restoration activities are implemented under both short- and long-term cooperative agreements with landowners. Past work includes: construction and maintenance of short- and long-term grazing control fences and off-channel livestock watering facilities; construction of mainstem channels, side channels, alcoves, and large wood structures to increase habitat diversity; planting native plant species to restore riparian ecosystems; management of noxious weeds; restoring fish passage; and improving stream and floodplain connectivity.

Inspection and maintenance of projects with easements would be on-going, including maintaining project vegetation; weed control and removal; monitoring for and removing trespassing livestock; maintaining and repairing/reconstructing fence lines and off-site water systems; and maintaining reconstructed stream channel and instream structures. Maintenance would be conducted on miles of fencing, numerous off-channel watering structures and acres of riparian and stream habitat within the Grande Ronde Basin and Umatilla River Subbasin. Weed spraying would be completed in the Umatilla Subbasin and, if necessary, would also be completed in the Grande Ronde Basin. These activities would be conducted throughout the year to comply with ODFW agreements and easements to ensure projects are meeting their objectives. Staff would investigate for trespass cattle on all riparian fencing projects.

Due diligence monitoring would also occur and includes water temperature; plant monitoring and survival; photo points; and measuring water levels and inundation within wetlands. Program staff would collect, enter, and analyze data and complete annual monitoring reports for Oregon Department of State Lands.

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/ Travis D. Kessler

Travis D. Kessler
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT, Inc.

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol Leiter FOR

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 27, 2020

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.

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Project Site Description

All activities would occur within the Grande Ronde and Umatilla Basins.

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 are no ground-disturbing activities. Thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing activities are proposed. Thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect geology and soils.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing or native vegetation removal activities proposed. Only invasive or noxious weeds would be removed or treated with herbicides.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing or other activity that may affect wildlife or wildlife habitat is proposed.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no impact to adjacent waterbodies or floodplains or fish because no ground-disturbing activities are proposed.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing activities are proposed. Thus, the action does not have the potential to impact wetlands.		
7. Groundwater and Aquifers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing activities that may affect groundwater or aquifers are proposed.		

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



Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities that may affect land use and specially-designated areas are proposed. Access to field sites is on existing road networks and all activities would be compatible with local land uses.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The proposed work would have no effect on visual quality. Any change to the viewshed would be short term and temporary.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any increase in emissions from vehicles accessing field sites would be very minor and short term.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: The proposed work would not result in an increase in ambient noise.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed work is not considered hazardous nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the general public.

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: No notification – All work would comply with ODFW agreements and easements to ensure projects are meeting objectives or would be within existing restoration sites.

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

Signed: /s/ Travis D. Kessler

Travis D. Kessler, ECF
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT, Inc.

Date: January 27, 2020