

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Resident Fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams

Project No.: 1997-004-00

Project Manager: Carlos Matthew

Location: Multiple counties in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring, B3.2 Aviation activities, and B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife and cultural resources.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration proposes to fund the assessment of resident fish species known to exist above Grand Coulee and Chief Joseph dams. The projects are designed and guided jointly by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Kalispel Natural Resource Department (KNRD), Spokane Tribe of Indians (STI), and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT).

The proposed actions include:

1. Develop RM&E Methods and Designs.
2. Operate and maintain traps in Priest River tributaries (Sanborn, Sadler, Big, and Quartz creeks) and maintain antenna arrays in Sanborn, Sadler, Big, Quartz, and Indian creeks.
3. Trap and mark westslope cutthroat and redband trout in Sadler, Sanborn, Big, and Quartz creeks.
4. Data collection from arrays in in Big, Sadler, Sanborn, Quartz, and Indian creeks.
5. Gillnet northern pike in Box Canyon Reservoir.
6. Electrofishing redband trout in the Spokane River.
7. Conduct fishery surveys at Onion and Big Sheep creeks.
8. Fish, hydrologic, and geomorphologic surveys: Installing stream gauges and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag arrays; conducting snorkel surveys; conducting aerial surveys (e.g. drones, airplanes, helicopter); conducting site assessments (e.g. pebble counts, elevation surveys); ongoing data collection.

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/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 4, 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.

Proposed Action: Resident Fish above Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee Dams

Project Site Description

All activities would occur within the Columbia River Basin upriver of the Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams in multiple counties in Idaho, Oregon and 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> The proposed activities would occur within the confines of the existing structures, and would not require any ground-disturbing activities for the completion of this work; thus, BPA determined that there would be no potential to affect historic or cultural resources. | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> The activities would not cause ground disturbance and would not affect the geology or 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 vegetation removal activities are proposed. All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites. | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing or vegetation removal activities are proposed; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect wildlife or wildlife habitat. All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites. | | |
| 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> Anadromous fish are anthropogenically blocked from the project sites and there are no documented bull trout or critical habitat within the project areas. State permitting requirements would be satisfied as needed to address potential impacts to fish. The work would not cause impacts to water bodies or floodplains. Therefore, there would be no affect to water bodies, floodplains, or fish. | | |
| 6. Wetlands | <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 wetlands. All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites. | | |

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities are proposed; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect wetlands. All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites.

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



Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities are proposed; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect land use. All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites; thus, the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: All work would be implemented at existing facilities or field sites and would not raise noise above normal workday levels. No effect.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



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, 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: All work at existing facilities or traps are managed by project managers and implemented on public or tribal lands (e.g., Colville National Forest, Yakama Nation). Work would be done in coordination with land managers (USFS; Oregon, Washington, and Idaho state lands; Yakama Nation; KNRD; STI; and CCT. Any work on private lands would only occur after project managers obtain landowner approval.

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

Date: June 4, 2020

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