

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Willamette Falls Pacific Lamprey Escapement Research (*Update to previous categorical exclusion issued on August 12, 2019*)

Project No.: 2008-308-00

Project Manager: Siena M. Lopez-Johnston

Location: Clackamas County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Oregon (CTWSRO) to study Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*) population trends through harvest and escapement estimates at Willamette Falls and Abernethy Creek near Oregon City, Clackamas County, Oregon. Escapement would be monitored from the spring through the fall at the fish ladder, at temporary lamprey ramps installed by Portland General Electric, and at the natural fish way over the falls. Creel surveys would be used to document harvest abundance. Major components of the proposed action include:

- (1) ***Collecting and tagging adult Pacific lamprey at Willamette Falls.*** Adult lamprey would be collected manually by hand or dip net or in lamprey-specific fish traps. If not previously tagged, lamprey would be implanted with a half-duplex (HDX) passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag as well as a secondary dart or floy tag, in case the PIT tag is expelled. Caudal fin clips would be collected and archived for future genetic analysis. After tagging and recovery, lamprey would be released approximately one river kilometer downstream of Willamette Falls near the mouth of Abernethy Creek. All recaptured fish would be released upstream of the sampling area. Up to 5,000 lamprey (or more as circumstances allow) would be tagged each season.
- (2) ***Installing, operating, and maintaining monitoring equipment at Willamette Falls.***
There would be three monitoring areas at Willamette Falls:
 - i. In the temporary lamprey ramps, previously installed video cameras are currently mounted on an existing structure on the exterior of the building. Although the cameras could be removed if necessary, they would typically be left in place from one year to the next.
 - ii. In the old fish way, a video camera and PIT tag array would be installed and uninstalled each year when water levels allow for work to be completed. Both types of equipment would be mounted on existing structures.

- iii. In the fish ladder, a series of previously installed PIT tag arrays are permanently mounted at intervals along the length of the ladder.

All monitoring equipment would be accessed periodically for routine maintenance and operation activities.

(3) ***Installing, operating, and maintaining monitoring equipment at Abernethy Creek.***

After water levels recede in the spring, an HDX antenna array and associated equipment box would be installed at the same location near the mouth of Abernethy Creek, just upstream of I-205. Installation would not require any ground disturbance as the antennas would be attached to cables tied to rocks on both banks and temporarily anchored to the streambed using loose rocks. The equipment box would sit on the bank. Field crews would periodically access the site for routine maintenance and operation activities.

(4) ***Conducting creel surveys at Willamette Falls.*** Voluntary interviews would be conducted throughout the harvest period to census harvest of adult Pacific lamprey. For each harvester who participates, all harvested lamprey would be examined for PIT tags and weighed, and the first ten harvested lamprey would also be measured for length. From this data, total harvest abundance would be estimated.

These activities would be consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program and would fulfill commitments begun under the 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords and additional Accord Extensions. Data collected, including lamprey escapement and harvest, are intended to provide population status and trends for Federal, state, and tribal resource managers and to help ensure continued tribal fishing opportunities at Willamette Falls.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

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: Willamette Falls Pacific Lamprey Escapement Research (Update to previous categorical exclusion issued on August 12, 2019).

Project Site Description

Willamette Falls and Abernethy Creek near Oregon City, Clackamas County, Oregon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA reviewed the undertaking and determined the proposed activities would have No Potential to Cause Effects to historic properties. The proposed activities (collect, tag, and monitor Pacific lamprey, install and operate antenna and video monitoring equipment at existing sites, and conduct creel surveys) would not affect the integrity of setting, material, location, workmanship, design, feeling, or association of the historic fish way at Willamette Falls. Furthermore, the proposed work would not cause ground disturbance, and would not include any activities with the potential to impact archaeological resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, there would be no impact to geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not require any tree or vegetation removal or management and would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected plant habitats. In addition, there would be no effect on state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence at lamprey collection and monitoring sites. However, proposed activities would be consistent with current land uses and recreational activities, and wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely be habituated to human activity. The proposed project would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species

habitat. Therefore, there would be no effect on state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Lamprey would be collected manually by hand or dipnet or in lamprey-specific fish traps. These methods are highly specific to lamprey, and there is no potential for inadvertent collection of protected fish species. Monitoring equipment installation, operation, and maintenance would occur at existing sites and would not impact protected fish or alter fish habitat. Therefore, there would be no effect on ESA or state special-status fish species, ESUs, or habitats. There would be no impact to water bodies or floodplains.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Although some work areas could be located within or near wetlands, no ground disturbance would occur as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, there would be no impact to wetland quality, condition, or size.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use and no impact to specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed actions would occur at existing sites. There would be no impact to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary emissions could increase in the local area from the transportation of staff and equipment to project areas. There would be no significant change in air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary noise could increase in the local area from vehicle and equipment use. However, these actions would not be inconsistent with current recreational

and land use activities typical of work areas. There would be no significant change in ambient noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Individuals carrying out proposed project activities would be trained in proper techniques and use of materials and equipment. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project 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: No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required as all proposed work would occur at existing facilities, and field work would be accessed via existing roads and adjacent public lands.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette October 6, 2020
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT