

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Snake River Chinook and Steelhead PBT Project

**Project No.:** 2010-031-00

**Project Manager:** Brady Allen - EWP-4

**Location:** Ada, Canyon, Custer, Gooding, Lemhi, Valley counties in Idaho and Whitman County, Washington

**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 (BPA) proposes to fund the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's ongoing evaluation of genetic technology for mass marking hatchery steelhead and Chinook salmon in the Snake River basin. Parental Based Tagging (PBT) is a better tool to meet Fish & Wildlife Program objectives associated with marking hatchery stocks, conducting hatchery evaluations and reform, and enforcing salmonid fishery management measures.

This project would genotype approximately 20,000 samples annually to create the first PBT baselines for hatchery steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*) in the Snake River basin. PBT samples would be collected from scales of carcasses in Snake River basin waterbodies or collected from hatchery program broodstock. Samples are provided by hatchery programs and personnel would assist other agencies in collection of carcass samples. This project would work closely with an existing BPA-funded project (2008-907-00) to ensure that future genetic marker sets used in the Columbia River basin are standardized, providing genetic tools for managing wild and hatchery stocks in the basin with Genetic Stock Identification techniques segregating adult wild runs by stock of origin, and PBT technologies identifying the stock and age of sampled hatchery fish.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System, 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/ Sarah T. Biegel                      August 3, 2021

Sarah T. Biegel                      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:** Snake River Chinook and Steelhead PBT Project

## **Project Site Description**

Broodstock sampling would occur within existing support infrastructure throughout Idaho and Washington. Carcass collection would occur within the Salmon and Pahsimeroi rivers, tributaries to the Snake River. Genotyping activities would be performed at laboratories located in Eagle and Hagerman, Idaho.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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. Carcass collection is led by other agencies and is not expected to disturb historic or cultural resources.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ground-disturbing activities required for the completion of this work and there would be no impact to geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No habitat present at the existing facilities. Carcass collection is led by other agencies and is not expected to impact vegetative resources. There are no anticipated impacts to any sensitive 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: No habitat present at the existing facilities. Carcass collection is led by other agencies and is not expected to impact wildlife with the exception of some minor disturbance due to temporary human presence. There are no anticipated impacts to any sensitive wildlife species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no live fish handled by the project. Carcass collection is led by other agencies and is not expected to disturb aquatic resources. There are no anticipated impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

**6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands are not located near any project site and there is no ground disturbance planned; therefore, the activities would not impact wetlands.

**7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground excavation is planned and the activities would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

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

**9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not impact visual quality.

**10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not impact air quality.

**11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not raise noise over ambient levels.

**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 on lands or property managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

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 August 3, 2021  
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient/CRGT