

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Columbia Stock Ranch Livestock Watering Sources Project

Project No.: 2010-073-00

Project Manager: Anne Creason, EWL - 4

Location: Columbia County, OR

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 Columbia Land Trust (CLT) to implement a livestock watering project on private land in Columbia County, Oregon. Two solar powered livestock watering sources would be installed in livestock pastures to eliminate the need for access to on-site sloughs and wetlands for water. Livestock are being maintained as a management strategy related to Columbia white-tailed deer habitat (CWTD) restoration work.

The proposed project would pipe water to a new water trough to provide water to livestock at the Columbia Stock Ranch (CSR). The previous source of livestock water has been cut off by fencing and planting projects that have increased and improved habitat for CWTD. Pipe (1 inch in diameter) to feed the trough would be installed using a combination of three methods: a tile plow, open trench excavation with a backhoe or similar excavator, or directional boring. For the tile plow installation method, the plow would simultaneously plow a trench, spool pipeline into the trench, and fill the trench back in. The methods used to install pipeline would depend, in part, on local conditions. For example, open trenching is likely to be used through the driveway near existing structures because the driveway is heavily compacted, making use of the tile plow challenging or impossible in this area. Similarly, directional boring is likely to be used under the existing railroad to avoid impacts to the railroad itself. The two pipelines would be 3,900 feet and 1,000 feet in length, respectively; and would be buried at a depth of 2 to 4 inches. The width of the trench would be 2 to 3 inches when dug by the tile plow (~4,000 feet) and 18 to 24 inches elsewhere; but the maximum trench width could be as wide as 36 inches where large rocks are encountered.

These actions would support conservation of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with both NMFS and USFWS on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System. These actions would support 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/ Shawn Skinner

Shawn Skinner
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange August 18, 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: Columbia Stock Ranch Livestock Watering Sources Project

Project Site Description

All activities would occur within the Columbia Stock Ranch site, which is located within the Lower Columbia River Basin. The pipelines would run from the existing well house on the site, through the barn area, existing roadway, fenceline, Columbia Stock Ranch Phase II planting area, and cattle pasture. The pipelines would not run through wetlands, but would go over the existing slough crossing (within the hardened driveway at the east end of the homestead) for about 115 feet. The slough is approximately 310 feet from the well house.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA made a determination of no adverse effect to historic properties on July 14, 2021 (OR 2020 135). BPA consulted with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. BPA did not receive concurrence from any consulting parties within 30 days.

Notes:

- In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped immediately and a BPA Archaeologist and Historian would be notified, as well as consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soil disturbance is anticipated from the moving of vehicles and equipment, operation of the tile plow, directional bore, and excavation. Disturbed areas would be thoroughly backfilled and compacted, and then replanted with a pasture mix grass seed to minimize erosion potential.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed or special-status plant species or habitats at the project site. Disturbed areas would be thoroughly backfilled and compacted, and then replanted with a pasture mix grass seed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed Columbia white-tailed deer (CWTD) are present within CSR. All proposed actions would occur outside of the fawning period (June 1 – July 15). A portion of the waterline would run through a CSR Phase II planting area (CWTD habitat). The waterline would be placed between the planted rows that are 7' apart, and disturbed areas would be replanted. These actions are covered under BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (PNF# 2021034). There are no other ESA-listed or special-status wildlife species or habitats at the project site; therefore, there would be no effect on ESA-listed species or critical habitats. Minor, short-term disturbance to local wildlife from human presence and noise during installation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions are not planned to occur in or adjacent to water bodies or floodplains, and have no potential to affect listed fish or their habitat.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Waterline would cross the slough within the existing road grade. A depth of 2 inches would not impact the existing culvert. The excavated area would be thoroughly backfilled and compacted. The project would not change the hydrology within the project area and is not anticipated to impact the slough or any additional wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or withdrawal of groundwater are planned for the project.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No visually prominent vegetative, landform, or structural changes would be made. The new livestock troughs would be consistent with the other agricultural components on the property.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary, short-term impacts from small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during project actions.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary, intermittent noise from construction activities would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions are not anticipated to create conditions that would increase the burden on the local health, safety, and emergency response infrastructure.

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: All work would occur on the Columbia Stock Ranch, which is private land owned by the Columbia Land Trust.

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

Signed: /s/ Shawn Skinner August 18, 2021
Shawn Skinner, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist