

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Scaffold Camp Floodplain Enhancement Project

Project No.: 2009-003-00

Project Manager: Tori Bohlen, EWU-4

Location: Okanogan County, Washington

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 provide funding to support implementation of the Yakama Nation Fisheries (YN) Scaffold Camp Floodplain Enhancement Project located on YN-owned property along the Twisp River near Twisp, Washington (WA). The project seeks to enhance adult spawning and juvenile rearing habitat for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Upper Columbia River (UCR) spring Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), UCR summer steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and Columbia River bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*).

Construction activities would include excavating 1,300 feet of perennial side channel and 400 feet of high flow side channel to improve flood distribution to the Twisp River floodplain and provide perennial flow or flood flow to the newly created channels. The project would also install a mainstem log structure at the inlet of the main side channel. Construction of the log structure would be isolated from flow in the channel using a bulk bag cofferdam. An excavator would be used to bank burry and/or install piling ballast at the structure. About 150 imported logs with roots would also be incorporated into the side channel construction areas as habitat structures that create diversity in velocity, inducing scour and deposition patterns, and dissipating flood energy through physical roughness. All removed trees and shrubs would be incorporated as instream habitat or floodplain roughness. Access and staging would occur via existing roads and previously disturbed areas and short temporary access routes to reach proposed wood structure sites. All areas disturbed during construction would be planted with native vegetation. The project would occur during the summer of 2023 with instream work occurring during the in-water work period of July 1 - 31.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp). These actions would also support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System.

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/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>April 26, 2023</u>
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: Scaffold Camp Floodplain Enhancement Project

Project Site Description

The project area is located in a rural area along the Twisp River, approximately 15 miles west of Twisp, Washington. This area is characterized by northern cascade riparian vegetation such as ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), cottonwoods (*Populus balsamifera*), and willow (*Salix spp*). There are large gravel bars to the east and west of the main channel. The project area is owned by YN. Down and upstream, privately-owned rural residences and agricultural fields are located on both banks of the Twisp River.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA identified an Area of Potential Effects and reviewed the project area for cultural and historic resources (BPA CR Project No. WA 2021 162). BPA determined that the project would result in *no historic properties affected* and on September 2, 2022, initiated consultation with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. On September 2, 2022, DAHP concurred with BPA's determination. No other responses were received from consulting parties. The consultation period ended October 3, 2022.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by a professional archaeologist.
- Sponsor to have a copy of the post-review discovery protocol on site during project implementation.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Restoration activities would disturb soils on the project site. Best Management Practices (BMP) have been developed to avoid or minimize temporary fine sediment impacts, increased turbidity downstream, and erosion during construction. All ground disturbance would be stabilized and monitored throughout the length of implementation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA- or state-listed plant species have been recorded in or near the project area. Non-listed plants in the project area would be impacted by project activities, such as ground disturbance and human presence. Areas with disturbed vegetation would be re-seeded and re-planted with native vegetation following project activities to restore site conditions. The long-term effects of project activities on vegetation would therefore be minimal to positive.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA- or state-listed wildlife species have been recorded in or near the project area and no designated critical habitat is present. Non-listed wildlife in the project area would be disturbed by the effects of project activities, such as human presence and noise from equipment. This disturbance would be limited in duration and cause no lasting impacts to local wildlife.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: ESA-listed Upper Columbia spring Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), summer steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) are present within the project stream reach. No separately listed state fish species have been recorded in the project area. While project activities are scheduled to take place during the in-water work window and outside of spawning season, there is the potential that some listed fish would be present in the stream reach during the proposed construction period. The proposed restoration actions would aid in floodplain re-connection, increase local water table, and improve instream complexity for fish habitat. Despite the short-term effects on fish in the area, the long-term effects of the project on fish, floodplains, and water bodies would be positive.

Notes:

- All actions that would have the potential to impact ESA-listed fish species would conform to the procedures and proscriptions contained in BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP4) programmatic biological opinions (HIP PNF 2023 046).
- To minimize impacts to spawning and rearing fish, all in-channel project activities would occur during the local in-water work window. No work would be conducted within the creek footprint outside of this time without first consulting with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife and BPA environmental compliance staff.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Most of the proposed work would take place within waters and wetlands, with the exception of staging and access, but these areas would be restored following construction. Wetland quality would improve due to the restoration of natural flow patterns and the replacement of invasive species with native plants.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The placement of the log structure and logs with roots in the channels may result in minor impacts to groundwater by encouraging greater amounts of water onto the floodplain

during high flows. The long-term increase in floodplain access would benefit groundwater recharge and function.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impact to recreational users due to access limitations during construction in the immediate project area. No long-term change in land use would occur. No specially-designated areas are present.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would have little to no effect on visual quality. The new wood structures would be visually consistent with adjacent vegetation and would not be located in a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minor increases in local air pollution during project activities due to exhaust from machinery and equipment. These effects would be limited in scope and duration and cause no long-term impacts to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minor increases in noise generated by machinery and equipment used during project activities. These effects would be limited in scope and cause no long-term impacts.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to ensure human health and safety. Solely licensed and trained professionals would operate all machinery.

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: The project would occur on land owned by YN. No coordination or outreach would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ Brenda Aguirre April 26, 2023
Brenda Aguirre Date
Environmental Protection Specialist