Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Yakama Nation's SF Manashtash, Frost Meadows Wood Replenishment Project, Phases IIA, IIB, and III

Project No.: 1997-051-00

Project Manager: Jennifer Lord, EWU-4

Location: Kittitas 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 fund the Yakama Nation (YN) to complete phases IIA, IIB, and III of wood replenishment on the South Fork (SF) Manashtash Creek and Frost Meadows floodplain in Kittitas County in Washington. The proposed project would benefit downstream ESA-listed steelhead as well as resident fish species, the stream is designated as fish-bearing; however, anadromous fish are not present.

The proposed project would include the removal of a dilapidated bridge decking and railing, and the placement of large wood across the floodplain to create roughness and initiate the collection of finer sediments to raise elevations and produce a multi-channeled river system. Adding roughness would also produce habitat complexity by encouraging the formation of pools, off channel habitat, and improved hyporheic flow. Log sizes placed would include large, at greater than 12 inches dbh, medium, at 8 to 10 inches dbh, and small less than 8 inches dbh.

Bridge component removal

As part of Phase IIA, YN would remove the dilapidated decking and railing of a decommissioned bridge. YN would utilize a rubber-tired tractor and skid winch to pull components out of the floodplain. Wooden bridge beams would be repositioned in-stream to provide aquatic habitat complexity. Abutments would be removed, and the road prism would be recontoured to restore natural hillslope topography. Native grasses would be seeded in disturbed areas to reduce erosion of the toe and hillside. Loose wood would be placed in the floodplain to add roughness to slow water and retain seeds and prevent sedimentation of the creek from exposed soils. Approximately eight medium sized logs and approximately 24 cubic yards of slash would be installed as part of this phase.

Wood replenishment

YN would install unanchored wood in the creek and the adjacent floodplain surfaces along SF Manashtash Creek. The proposed treatment area would be approximately 1.6 stream miles. YN would utilize native trees harvested from an overstocked forest of approximately 10 acres, following a silvicultural prescription for forest health and wildlife habitat. All the proposed treated

reaches would be areas that are deficient in woody material and areas where replenishing woody material would have abundant opportunities to catch on meandering bends, trees, and brush during high flows.

Basic in-stream wood structure layout would consist of placing one large base log across the channel on the downstream skew to the bank line that would either anchor or buttress on-bank portion of large wood debris to existing riparian trees. Place one medium anchor log across base log on downstream skew to bank line. Anchor or buttress on-bank portion of large wood debris to existing riparian trees. Place additional small diameter matrix large wood material and slash within and peripheral to key logs to enhance structure habitat and hydraulic complexity. Weave large wood material into preceding logs to develop a stable interlaced matrix. Larger material to be woven in tension and compression. Gaps of 1.5 feet in structure would be created above the thalweg to maintain fish passage pathways. Floodplain wood placement would consist of single log placements throughout the floodplain.

As part of Phase IIB, YN would place approximately 100 large logs (three per structure), 100 medium logs (three per structure), and 300 cubic yards of slash (8 cubic yards per structure). Approximately 20 logs would be placed on the floodplain with approximately 30 structures consisting of multiple logs being placed within the ordinary high water.

As part of Phase III, YN would place another approximately 100 large logs (four per structure), 100 medium logs (four per structure), 300 cubic yards of slash (12 per structure). Approximately 20 logs would be placed on the floodplain with approximately 23 structures consisting of multiple logs being placed within the ordinary high water.

YN would conduct adaptive management actions for multiple years post-implementation to assure project functionality continues. YN would add materials to enhance structural integrity and provide enhanced structure functions across the entirety of the project area and phases. YN would add length across the channel to structures to accommodate for stream bank migration so that the structure meet their intended purpose after channel migration. Structures would be assessed for adequate flow or passage, for sections becoming dislodged and transported off site, for ecological function, and for orientation to flow. In the years after wood installation, YN would implement riparian plantings where natural recruitment is inadequate. Riparian species would include on-site native willows and dogwoods, and the seed mix would include locally adapted native grasses and forbs.

Funding the proposed actions would support Bonneville's commitments to the Yakama Nation under the 2022 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System 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.

CATHERINE CLARK

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Catherine Clark
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

KATEY GRANGE

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Katey C. Grange
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: Yakama Nation's SF Manashtash, Frost Meadows Wood Replenishment Project, Phases IIA, IIB, and III

Project Site Description

The project phases would take place on SF Manashtash Creek at Frost Meadows. The project reach is located on a portion of the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area managed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Township 18N, Range 15E, and Section 17. Together, the entire L.T. Murray Complex covers roughly 110,000 acres, with approximately 30,000 acres managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The remaining 80,000 acres is managed by WDFW. The L.T. Murray Complex is primarily made up of rangeland. The road leading to the dilapidated bridge has been previously decommissioned by WDFW for the safety of recreation users.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA Archaeologist conducted National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultations with the Washington (WA) State Historic Preservation Office (DAHP), WDFW, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT). BPA determined that the implementation would result in No Historic Properties Affected, pending all construction be conducted under the guidance of the post-review discovery plan (WA 2020 048). BPA received a response on May 15, 2024 from DAHP concurring with BPA's determination; no other responses were received.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Removal of bridge components, harvest of trees, placement of large wood, and woody debris by heavy equipment would temporarily disturb soils on the project site. Recontouring of road prism would disturb approximately 305 cubic yards of soil along the existing road. All ground disturbance would be stabilized with native seeding and planting post-construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed white-bark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) is known to exist in the project area. YN would work with a WDFW silviculturist for all wood harvest activities and tree avoidance. ESA-listed and state special-status plants species would be avoided in accordance with the

forest management plan and the project would have no effect on ESA-listed plant species. Areas that are disturbed within the floodplain would be revegetated with native plant species. Therefore, long term effects would be an increase in native vegetation within the floodplain and riparian zones of the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*), Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), and Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) have the potential to occur in the project area. The nearest historic Northern spotted owl location would be over 1 mile away, there would be no timing restriction for harvesting actions; however, thinning within the overstock forest would encourage Northern spotted owl habitat. There would be potential for activities to temporarily displace ESA-listed and state special-status wildlife species due to human activity; however, the displacement would be minor and short term. In the long term, this project was designed to increase habitat complexity and increase floodplain inundation which would increase riparian vegetation. Project-related impacts to ESA-listed species are addressed in BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) biological opinions with USFWS.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project work would occur above the extent of anadromy for ESA-listed salmon species and there are no bull trout or state special-status species in the waterbody; therefore, there is no potential to cause effect to ESA-listed species. Implementation would occur during lower flows or in the dry during summer months; therefore, minimal impact to non-ESA-listed fish species or to the waterbody would occur. In the long term, this project was designed to increase habitat complexity and increase floodplain inundation and benefit downstream ESA-listed steelhead.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands located in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground-disturbing activities are not likely to intersect with groundwater and would have no impact on aquifers. Construction BMPs would be implemented to prevent contamination of groundwater from equipment leaks or spills.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: This project would be located on WDFW-managed property. Pedestrian public access for the project area would remain; therefore, no changes to land use would occur.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor changes to visual quality. The tree harvest would be consistent with the forest area's management plan for pre-commercial thinning actions. The bridge removal would return the project area to a more naturally occurring visual consistency. The new wood placements would be visually consistent with adjacent vegetation and topography of the proposed wood placement and would not be located in a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in emissions and dust from vehicles accessing the site during construction activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in ambient noise during construction. Any noise emitted from construction equipment would be short term and temporary during daylight

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Removing bridge components and installing large wood would be considered hazardous for human safety. However, 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: 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: WDFW is the land manager. YN has been in coordination with WDFW for implementation of this proposed project.

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

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