

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Coeur d'Alene Tribe Trout Ponds Operations and Maintenance

**Project No.:** 2007-024-00

**Project Manager:** Lee Watts, EWM-4

**Location:** Benewah and Kootenai counties, ID; Spokane County, WA

**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 Coeur d'Alene Tribe to operate put and take fisheries at multiple locations on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation (DeSmet Pond, Agency Pond, T633 Pond, Worley Pond, and in the Hangman Creek watershed) as mitigation for the loss of anadromous fish due to the construction of Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams. Activities would focus on providing optimal recreational and subsistence harvest opportunities using rainbow trout from fish hatcheries.

Operations and maintenance would include the following:

- Stocking ponds with approximately 8,000 pounds of triploid rainbow trout based on expected harvest and fish availability and depending on pond conditions.
- Stocking and maintaining up to 500 adult salmon annually depending on availability in the Hangman Creek watershed.
- Maintaining access roads and parking areas within the existing road prism by grading and spreading gravel, as needed.
- Controlling terrestrial vegetation around ponds/parking areas by mowing to maintain access to ponds for fishing.
- Controlling aquatic vegetation by mechanical or hand removal to provide clear avenues for fishing.
- Providing several educational and fishing related experiences, such as youth fishing day and trout/salmon classroom experiences for schools on the Reservation.

These actions also support Bonneville's commitments to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe in the Columbia River Fish Accord, as amended, 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.

Shawn Skinner  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel  
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:** Coeur d'Alene Tribe Trout Ponds Operations and Maintenance

## **Project Site Description**

The project area is located in northwestern Idaho on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. All activities would occur at the four project ponds, the 1-mile reach of Hangman Creek, or the surrounding access roads/parking areas. The four ponds are surrounded by a mix of forest, grasslands, and cleared gravel/dirt roads or parking areas. T633 Pond is also bordered by a freshwater forested/shrub wetland to its east. All the sites are secured to prevent fish escapement.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Routine maintenance to roads would be within the existing road prism. BPA archaeologist confirmed that the proposed activities would not have the potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Maintenance required would include grading and applying gravel to access roads. Impacts would be minor and within the existing road prism.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Vegetation would be removed only where necessary to maintain access to the sites. The impacts to non-listed plants would be low and confined to existing access routes. There are no Federal/state special-status plant species in the project area. Therefore, the proposed action would not affect special-status plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, short-term impact to wildlife during road grading activities due to noise and human presence. There are no Federal/state special-status wildlife species in the project area. No long-term effect on wildlife or wildlife habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, short-term impact to fish during in-pond vegetation removal. Anadromous fish are anthropogenically blocked from the pond sites and there are no documented bull trout or designated critical habitat within the project areas. Adult salmon would be transplanted and confined to a 1-mile reach of Hangman Creek bounded by migration barriers. The migration barriers would passively keep fish in the area for harvest. The work would not cause impacts to water bodies or floodplains.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands present in the project area. T633 Pond has a wetland approximately 100 feet to its east. The proposed action would occur entirely within the pond and access road and not in the wetland. Therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would have no impact to groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would not impact or change land use.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change to visual quality.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any increase in emissions from vehicles accessing field sites would be very minor and short term.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any increase in ambient noise from vehicles accessing field sites would be very minor and short term.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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: All work would occur on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation and in coordination with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

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

Signed:

Shawn Skinner  
Environmental Protection Specialist