

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Indian Creek Bench Property Acquisition Funding

Project No.: 1992-061-00/BPA-010597

Project Manager: Lee Watts

Location: Pend Oreille County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund the Kalispel Tribe to purchase Indian Creek Bench, a 30-acre parcel of land located eight miles northwest of Newport, Washington, and 55 miles north of Spokane, Washington, in Pend Oreille, Washington. BPA would hold a conservation easement to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat.

Funding the purchase of the property would serve as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System which includes dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers. This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's commitments made in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Kalispel Tribe of Indians and the Bonneville Power Administration.

The property consists of mixed conifer forest habitat. The Kalispel Tribe would develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

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, July 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/ Jennifer Snyder

Jennifer Snyder
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad J. Hamel

Chad J. Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 5, 2019

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.

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Project Site Description

The 30-acre Indian Creek Bench site is comprised of mixed upland coniferous forest and lies approximately one mile north of the Pend Oreille River, 0.6 miles east of Indian Creek, approximately eight miles northwest of Newport, WA, and 55 miles north of Spokane, WA. It is accessed via Indian Creek Road which serves as the northern property boundary. Land uses within the area are primarily timber cultivation and agriculture with some residential. The subject property is zoned Natural Resource 20 - it is used primarily for light recreation. Past practices included timber harvesting but there is currently little evidence of disturbance on the property. The property hosts white-tailed deer and bald eagle; any ESA-listed species present would be considered an infrequent transient visitor.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition, which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
7. Groundwater and Aquifers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		

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

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: A public notification letter and map would be mailed to neighboring landowners, local elected officials, and other interested parties prior to acquisition closing. Advertisements would also be placed in local newspapers, and information would be posted on BPA's public website.

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

Signed: /s/ Jennifer Snyder

Jennifer Snyder – ECF-4

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC

Date: April 5, 2019