

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lake Pend Oreille/Dworshak Resident Fish Mitigation Project

Project No.: 2019-005-00

Project Manager: C. Veenstra, EWL-4

Location: Bonner, Clearwater, and Kootenai counties, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources.

Description of the Proposed Action: IDFG is proposing to conduct a number of studies to assist managers in determining how best to manage the fisheries in Lake Pend Oreille and Dworshak Reservoir. Studies will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Trawling to collect kokanee for studies on population, biomass, age, size, and reproductive success
- Marking otoliths of hatchery kokanee and collecting and analyzing otoliths from wild and hatchery kokanee
- Hydroacoustic surveys for fish abundance
- Conducting spawner counts along the shoreline
- Monitor shoreline gravel by scuba diving and core sampling and analysis
- Monthly monitoring of limnological factors – water temperature, dissolved oxygen, water clarity, and zooplankton
- Collecting Mysis shrimp via hoop net to estimate population levels
- Monitoring fish populations in the Pend Oreille River by gillnetting, seining, and/or electrofishing
- Catching and removing lake trout and walleye in Lake Pend Oreille by gillnetting
- Collecting biological data on bull trout bycatch during lake trout and walleye removal

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:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 4, 2020

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

All activities would occur in Bonner, Clearwater, and Kootenai counties in Idaho.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance planned and there would be no impacts to historic or cultural resources as a result of these actions.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance planned and geology and soils would not be impacted by the proposed activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no anticipated impacts to any plant species, and no special-status species exist within the immediate area of impact.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The actions would not impact wildlife within the project areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact waterbodies or floodplains due to lack of ground-disturbing activities. There would be some impact to listed bull trout. IDFG has a Section 6 cooperative agreement with the USFWS that allows incidental take of bull trout. BPA is consulting with the USFWS under Section 7 for its action of funding the project and has ESA coverage for incidental take of bull trout under IDFG's Section 6 agreement in the interim.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance planned; activities would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance planned; activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact or change land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise levels may be increased at night during study surveys; however, the increased level would occur infrequently and for a short period of time.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Safety regulations would be followed as necessary.

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:

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

Explanation:

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:

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: This work would be implemented at existing facilities, in the reservoirs, or on public lands managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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
Brenda Aguirre ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: June 4, 2020