

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Umatilla Anadromous Fish Habitat Routine Maintenance Activities

Project No.: 1987-100-01

Project Manager: Tim Ludington, EWL-4

Location: Umatilla and Union counties, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat; B3.2 Aviation activities; B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation (CTUIR) to implement various ongoing habitat protection, restoration and improvement activities consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. Activities would include small-scale habitat protection, restoration, and improvement actions that may have the potential for short-term effects but would result in long-term benefits for terrestrial and aquatic species and their habitats.

The proposed actions include:

- Vegetation planting and non-native plant control: Planting and maintaining vegetation and removing vegetation by mechanical, biological, or chemical means at previously established locations.
- Inspect and maintain instream improvement structures: Maintenance visits at six previously installed projects would be conducted quarterly. Additional visits may follow high flow events or in responses to landowner requests. Work would include, but not limited to, meeting specified conditional language in state and Federal permits, removing debris that is routinely captured or caught on in-stream structures, and completion of post treatment surveys to monitor and quantify changes to physical and ecological responses. No ground disturbance or installation of new instream structures would occur.
- Fish, hydrologic, and geomorphologic surveys: Manually installing stream gauges and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag arrays at previously-established locations; conducting snorkel surveys; conducting aerial surveys (e.g. drones, airplanes, helicopter); conducting site assessments (e.g. pebble counts, elevation surveys).
- Fencing maintenance: In kind repair of existing fencing.

Funding the proposed activities would support habitat improvement efforts for Middle Columbia River Steelhead under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp), commitments specified in the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp), and Bonneville's commitments to the CTUIR under the 2018 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the FCRPS on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its

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 at previously completed projects on private property within the Umatilla River Basin in Umatilla and Union counties in Oregon. The project sites are surrounded by a mix of agricultural and wildlands and are accessed from existing public and private roads. The Umatilla River is a tributary to the Columbia River in northeastern Oregon. The Umatilla River Basin has been the location of numerous river, stream, and passage restoration projects that were designed to address local limiting factors at sites typically located within stream courses, along river banks, and in adjacent riparian, agricultural, or grazing areas along the Umatilla River and its tributaries.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA Archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these types of activities would constitute 'no potential to affect historic properties'.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary impact to soils and geology may occur during some planting and maintenance activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed, or "special status," plant species are present in these locations. Herbicide applications would be according to label instructions and the sponsor would follow Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) conservation measures to minimize the potential for drift or runoff to non-target vegetation. Maintenance and other activities would not disturb plants beyond the minimal trampling by workers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The sponsor would follow HIP conservation measures to minimize the potential for herbicide drift or runoff. Fence maintenance and monitoring would not disturb wildlife beyond the minimal presence of workers temporarily displacing wildlife. However the effect would be temporary in nature and the work would have no potential for significant effects to wildlife, including ESA-listed wildlife or Federal or state special-status species and habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed fish species (Chinook, steelhead and bull trout) and their designated critical habitats are present in the project areas, but proposed actions would not physically alter any aquatic habitat site; there would be no adverse physical changes to water bodies, floodplains, or fish from these actions. Maintenance and monitoring activities would have no effect. Herbicide applications would be conducted in accordance with the current programmatic biological opinion issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service on the effects of BPA's HIP. The project sponsor would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP. Effects to Federally-listed fish such as Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout are addressed in HIP#2020092.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project sites and therefore no impact to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes or modifications to land use would occur; activities would support and be consistent with existing land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Visual quality of immediate project areas may be impacted during project activities due to equipment staging and personnel, but impacts would be short term and minor.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Air quality may be impacted by the additional travel to project sites and activities but impacts would be local and temporary in nature.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some work activities would raise noise levels above ambient levels for short periods of time, but only during regular working hours until completed.

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: NA

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

Explanation: NA

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: NA

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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The work would occur on private property and underlying landowners were notified and support the work.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran September 9, 2020
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT