

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YTAHP Coleman Creek 4.3 at Beard/Leuck Habitat Improvement Project
(update to CX issued on October 6, 2021)

Project No.: 2007-398-00

Project Manager: Michelle O'Malley - 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 Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) of the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP) to implement the Coleman Creek 4.3 at Beard/Leuck aquatic and riparian habitat improvement project on private land near Ellensburg, Washington. This project is a collaboration between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Yakama Nation Fisheries, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, KCCD and private landowners. Coleman Creek is utilized by Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead, Chinook and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes. This CX has been updated to reflect a change in implementation year and to correct information about project purpose.

Implementation of the proposed project would remove a decommissioned concrete diversion dam from Coleman Creek, screen two pump diversions with National Marine Fisheries Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife compliant fish screens, add spawning gravels and habitat boulder clusters to the creek and install a porous weir, plant nearly 1,000 native trees and shrubs in the riparian area, and install livestock exclusion fencing around the riparian area. Work would be undertaken with heavy equipment such as excavators. Areas disturbed during construction would be revegetated with native plants. All access and staging would occur via existing roads and previously disturbed areas. KCCD would implement the project in the fall.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System, 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.

/s/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

June 30, 2022

Katey C. Grange

Date

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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on Coleman Creek at River Mile (RM) 4.3. Coleman Creek is a focus of local restoration efforts and several fish passage barriers have been removed, irrigation diversions screened, and habitat enhanced. Coleman Creek is utilized by a suite of fishes, including ESA-listed steelhead, and spring Chinook and coho salmon, all of which have been documented in reaches downstream of the project. Coleman Creek is a tributary to Naneum Creek, which flows into Wilson Creek, which is a tributary to the Yakima River at RM 147. The project site is located within the Coleman Creek Subwatershed of the Upper Yakima River Subbasin. The legal description is T17N, R19E, Sec 16. The surrounding area is used for agricultural crop production and grazing. There are also an RV pad and pump house on the south side of the project area where staging would occur near these structures, and a mill pond in the middle of the project where fish-compliant pump screens would be installed on the pond's inlet and outlet structures.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA determined that the implementation of the proposed project would result in no historic properties affected and consulted on the determination under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act on August 3, 2021. Consulting parties included the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). DAHP concurred with BPA's effects determination on August 9, 2021 and August 17, 2021. The Yakama Nation concurred with BPA's determination and requested a cultural resources monitor be present during implementation of specific project elements. No other responses were received during the 30-day consultation period (ending September 2, 2021).

Note:

- A cultural resources monitor shall be present during project implementation activities near the RV pad and pump house, as well as implementation activities at the inlet and outlet of the mill pond.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to soil from increased erosion potential during dam removal, addition of spawning gravels and habitat boulders, and installation of a porous weir. Sediment control best management practices would be installed prior to project implementation to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or excessive runoff during

construction. Post construction planting with native trees and shrubs would minimize long-term erosion potential.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed, plant species are known to be present. Temporary impacts to existing vegetation from equipment crushing some plants while accessing work areas. Post construction planting would re-establish areas of disturbed vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed, wildlife species or habitats are known to be present. Temporary impacts to area wildlife would occur from increased noise and vehicle traffic during construction. Wildlife would likely avoid the area during this time and return once the project work is completed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary sedimentation would be generated with instream work. KCCD obtained Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 authorization under NWP 27 from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to excavate and place material in Coleman Creek, and would implement all terms and conditions of NWP 27. USACE also authorized that the work complies with the Washington State Department of Ecology's Water Quality Certification (CWA Section 401) requirement for NWP 27. There would be no net rise in floodplain elevations from implementation of the project activities. The project would have an effect on fish and their habitats during in-water work. ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead and their designated critical habitat area present in the project area. Project activities are covered under BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion, Project Notification Number 2022079. KCCD would follow HIP general and project-specific conservation measures to avoid and minimize impacts to fish throughout project implementation.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose new wells or use of groundwater; spill prevention measures would be present on site during use of heavy equipment.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose changes to land use; designated farmlands would not be taken out of production.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor change to visuals from concrete rubble removal, placement of habitat boulders and spawning gravels, and planting of a robust riparian buffer. The new conditions would be visually consistent with the topography of the existing channel and surrounding area and adjacent vegetation. Construction equipment would be visually consistent with area agricultural equipment. The project is not within a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be short-term construction noise during daylight hours. Construction noise would not be noticeably different than the agricultural production noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project sponsor is required to use best management practices to protect worker health and safety. Any activities involving hazardous materials would be disposed of at a designated hazardous waste facility.

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: Implementation of project activities would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor, KCCD, has coordinated with the underlying landowner and irrigation water users and has permission to conduct project activities.

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 June 30, 2022
Brenda Aguirre, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist