

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YTAHP Naneum Creek RM 2.9 and 3.2 Fish Passage and Screening Project

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 a fish passage and screening improvement project in Naneum Creek at River Miles (RM) 2.9 and 3.2 on private land near Ellensburg, Washington. The project would benefit Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead, Chinook and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes.

KCCD would remove two channel-spanning concrete dams that are used to facilitate gravity irrigation. The dams are fish passage barriers and the diversions are unscreened, which puts fish at direct risk of entrainment into artificial waterways that do not return to the stream. KCCD would remove both dams from the stream channel, decommission the irrigation intakes, restore the streambed, and install a NMFS and WDFW compliant fish screen on a new consolidated pump diversion downstream of the lowest diversion (RM 2.9).

The dam at RM 2.9 is derelict. The concrete is no longer embedded in the banks and streambed. For this reason, the dam would be "plucked" from the stream using local isolation and water control in lieu of a full stream bypass. Fish would be herded out of the work area with a seine, followed by spot electrofishing as needed, with installation of block nets at the upstream and downstream ends. This method would be the least impactful to the aquatic community, water quality, and stream processes and has been approved by the regulatory agencies (WDFW and NMFS). The removal would occur during the lowest winter flows, also approved by the regulatory agencies.

The concrete dam at RM 3.2 is still embedded in the banks and streambed and would therefore be isolated from flowing water using a stream bypass, allowing in-channel work to occur in the dry to minimize impacts to aquatic life and water quality. Fish salvage would occur, and be performed by WDFW biologists, and block nets would be installed to isolate fish from the work areas, as needed.

The new consolidated point of diversion would be located approximately 700-feet downstream of RM 2.9. The new diversion would be served by a single 75 hp, 3 cfs-pump with a flexible intake hose equipped with a NMFS and WDFW compliant fish screen (12-inch Riverscreen). The intake hose would be in Naneum Creek annually during the irrigation season – approximately April to October – and would be removed during the non-irrigation season, using an existing on-site

boom. The new pump would be located on the bank and there would be no instream work associated with the installation.

The proposed project would restore fish passage to 0.8 miles of Naneum Creek, protect fish from entrainment into artificial waterways, and plant riparian areas with native trees and shrubs. Work at RM 2.9 and 3.2 would be undertaken with heavy equipment such as an excavator equipped with a thumb. All access and staging would occur via existing roads and previously-disturbed areas. Upon project completion, all disturbed areas would be cleaned, seeded, and replanted with native vegetation where appropriate. KCCD would implement in-water work at RM 2.9 outside the irrigation season in late winter, approximately April of 2024, and in-water work at RM 3.2 would occur during low fall flows, approximately October of 2024.

The proposed 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.

Brenda Aguirre
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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on Naneum Creek at RM 2.9 and 3.2 near the City of Ellensburg, WA. Naneum Creek is a focus of local restoration efforts and several fish passage barriers have been removed, irrigation diversions screened, and habitat enhanced. Naneum 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. Naneum Creek is a tributary to Wilson Creek, which is a tributary to the Yakima River at RM 147. The project site is located within the Naneum Creek Subwatershed of the Upper Yakima River Subbasin. The legal description is T17N, R19E, Sec 17. The surrounding area is used for agricultural crop production and grazing.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA determined that 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 December 7, 2023 (CR No. WA 2022 123). Consulting parties included the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation), the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). DAHP concurred with BPA's effects determination on January 2, 2024. The Yakama Nation requested additional edits to the report on December 18, 2023, and again on January 11, 2024. The finalized report was sent to all consulting parties on February 14, 2024, but because the changes to the report did not affect BPA's determinations of effect or eligibility, another 30-day consultation was not necessary. No other responses were received during the 30-day consultation period (ending January 25, 2024).

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to soil from increased erosion potential during irrigation diversion removals, channel restorations, and planting disturbed areas. 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 designated critical 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 Naneum 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 are present in the project area. Project activities are covered under BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion. 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 the proposed activities. 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 user 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:

Brenda Aguirre, ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist