

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Cle Elum Supplementation Research Facility Fiber Optic Installation

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 1997-013-25

Project Manager: Michelle O'Malley – EWU-4

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber optic cable

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to provide funding to the Yakima Klickitat Fisheries Program (YKFP) to install a new fiber optic line to improve communications capacity at the Cle Elum Supplementation Research Facility (CESRF). The new fiber optic cable would be installed between an existing power pole base and the CESRF main office. Approximately 230 linear feet of trench would be excavated between the existing power pole base and an existing utility vault that services the hatchery. From the utility vault, the cable would be pulled to the main office using existing conduit lines. The 230-foot-long X 1.5-foot-wide trench would be excavated using a ditch witch to a depth of up to three (3) feet. Once the cable is installed, trenched areas would be backfilled with native materials to preconstruction grade. All ground disturbing work and vehicle access and staging would occur within previously disturbed grass covered surfaces at the CESRF. Access to the site would be on an existing unpaved road typically used to reach the existing utility vault and communication line for routine maintenance.

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/ Michele Palmer

Michele Palmer
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 2, 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

The project is located in Kittitas County, Washington, approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the City of Cle Elum on Charter Road (Township 20 North, Range 15 East, Section 28). The land is owned by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). All project work including equipment staging would take place within the Cle Elum Supplementation Research Facility (CESRF) boundaries and would be located in a previously disturbed area predominated by grasses and situated within a Ponderosa Pine forest understory. Although the project site is within the 100-year floodplain, the project would be implemented above the ordinary high water mark in an upland area over 100 feet to the north of an oxbow side-channel. This side-channel confluences at its downstream end with the Yakima River about 0.5 miles away from the site at Yakima River mile 184. Access to the project site would be via an existing unpaved road typically used to reach an existing utility vault and communication line for routine maintenance.

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> Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (WA DAHP) concurrence on no effect determination, 05/19/2020 (BPA CR #: WA 2020 147, Log No.: 2020-05-03444-BPA). An Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) was shared with the sponsor per the request of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (6/12/20). No comments were received from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Short-term, minimal soil disturbance would occur during installation activities. Trench would be backfilled with native materials, and then compacted to preconstruction grade to lessen erosion potential.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status plant species present. Minimal area (0.38 acres) of grasses disturbed.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status wildlife species or designated critical habitat have been documented in, or adjacent to the project area. Minimal area (0.38 acres) of low quality habitat typical of area would be disturbed.		

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

Explanation: The nearest water bodies are the Upper Yakima River and an oxbow to the river, which are about 0.5 miles and over 100 feet away, respectively. The Yakima River is designated critical habitat (DCH) for federally threatened Mid-Columbia River (MCR) steelhead and bull trout. There is no direct connection between the project area and these water bodies; as such, it is not anticipated that any spills or excavated materials would reach these areas. Typical erosion control BMPs would be implemented. Due to lack of direct connectivity between the project area and waterbodies, combined with implementation of BMPs, the proposed project activities would have no effect on any fish species (including Federally threatened MCR steelhead and bull trout) or their aquatic habitats. The project work area is within the 100-year floodplain in an upland area above the ordinary high water mark. Due to return of disturbed areas to preconstruction grade, floodplain functioning would not be affected.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands present within the project area. The nearest Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland is over 75 feet away.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No new wells or use of ground water are proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would be approximately three (3) feet; spill prevention measures would be present on site.

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

Explanation: No change to existing land use would occur. The facility is not in a specially-designated area.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The excavation area would be restored to a pre-project grade and would be visually consistent with adjacent area and would not be located in a visually sensitive area.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Temporary, small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions would be generated during installation activities.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No new health or safety risks are anticipated.

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: The proposed project area is located on BPA fee-owned property. Yakama Nation is coordinating with Puget Sound Energy and BPA for this project.

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

Signed: /s/ Michele Palmer
Michele Palmer, ECP-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: July 2, 2020