

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Tribal Pacific Lamprey Restoration Plan

Project No.: 2008-524-00

Project Manager: Siena Lopez-Johnston

Location: Multiple Counties in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to continue funding the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) to implement the objectives and actions outlined in the Tribal Pacific Lamprey Restoration Plan (TPLRP), which seeks to inform regional management and understanding for the recovery of the species. In general, CRITFC would leverage resources and share research and technical expertise in collaboration with the Hagerman Genetics Lab at the University of Idaho and CRITFC member tribes – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Nez Perce Tribe (NPT), Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS). Primary components of the proposed action include:

- Genetic monitoring of Pacific lamprey: CRITFC would provide supplies (e.g. Whatman paper, coin envelopes, and scissors) and organize, process, and analyze tissue samples and environmental DNA (eDNA) water samples at the Hagerman Genetics Lab. The Tribes and other collaborators would be collecting tissue and water samples and directly catching, handling, and releasing the lamprey.
- Larval lamprey surveys: NPT would be subcontracted to conduct larval Pacific lamprey surveys in spawning tributaries that are also sites for adult reintroductions. Using backpack electrofishing techniques, NPT would survey 1 square meter sections within each river reach stratum to allow comparison of relative abundance within and between habitats. NPT would also collect tissue samples and record river temperature, flow, conductivity, substrate size, and wetted channel width.
- Adult Pacific lamprey collection and transfer: CRITFC would collect migrating adult Pacific lamprey at the Columbia River main stem dams (Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day Dams) and transfer them to member tribes, who would use the lamprey for translocation as well as for research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts. Pacific lamprey would be transported following the Tribal Guidelines for Translocation.

The proposed project would not require any ground disturbance or vegetation removal or management. Collection activities at the main stem dams would not require any change in dam operations.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad J. Hamel

Chad J. Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 8, 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.

Proposed Action: Tribal Pacific Lamprey Restoration Plan

Project Site Description

All activities would occur at existing facilities and field sites throughout the Columbia River Basin.

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> As no ground disturbance, tree or vegetation removal or management, or modifications to existing structures would occur as a result of the proposed project, BPA has determined that this undertaking would have No Potential to Affect historic properties. | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would occur as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, there would be no impact to geology and soils. | | |
| 3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project would not require any tree or vegetation removal or management and would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species habitats. Therefore, there would be no effect on state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during Pacific lamprey collection and translocation. However, wildlife species that may be present in the area around the main stem dams would likely be habituated to human activity. The proposed project would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species habitats. Therefore, there would be no effect on state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA. | | |

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)



Explanation: The Pacific lamprey traps at the main stem dams are located in the fishways behind the picketed leads and at the Bonneville Dam Adult Fish Facility lamprey ramp, where protected salmonid species do not have access. The remaining proposed actions support efforts by the Tribes or other regional partners, who have secured necessary ESA permits:

- ESA Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit (File Number; 1134 - 7R) - Assess the status of Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Snake, Salmon, Clearwater, Imnaha, and Grande Ronde river basins
- ESA Section 7(a)(2) biological opinion (Consultation Number: WCR-2017-7615) - Final Mid-Columbia Chinook salmon and steelhead hatchery programs

CRITFC's proposed actions would either result in no effect on protected fish species, ESUs, and habitats or would be covered under the above permits and consultations secured by the Tribes or other regional partners.

There would be no impact to water bodies or floodplains.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The proposed project would not require any ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed project would not require any ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change in land use. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change in visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Minor and temporary emissions could increase in the local area from vehicle and equipment use during Pacific lamprey collection and translocation. There would be no permanent change in air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Minor and temporary noise could increase in the local area from vehicle and equipment use during Pacific lamprey collection and translocation. There would be no permanent change in ambient noise.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Individuals carrying out proposed project activities would be trained in proper techniques and safe use of materials and equipment. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project 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, 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: No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required as all proposed work would occur at existing facilities and field work would be accessed via existing roads and adjacent public lands.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette
W. Walker Stinnette – EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Date: July 8, 2020