

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lake Roosevelt Burbot Population Assessment

Project No.: 2008-115-00

Project Manager: Carlos Mathews

Location: Okanogan County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):

B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources

Description of the Proposed Action:

The purpose of this project is to improve understanding of the factors that influence population abundance of burbot in Lake Roosevelt. Colville biologists conduct sampling and capture age 0 and age 1 burbot using minnow traps, bongo nets (spring), and trawls (summer/fall). Bongo net tows would be conducted up to 20 days in the spring. Trawling would be conducted up to 10 days in the fall. Captured burbot would be measured for total length and weighed, and otoliths would be extracted for aging.

A bongo net consists of two plankton nets mounted next to each other. These plankton nets are ring nets with a small mesh width and a long funnel shape. The bongo net is pulled horizontally through the water column by a research vessel. Trawl nets are larger nets pulled by a boat and used in deeper water.

Multiple tributaries would be surveyed using eDNA techniques to determine if burbot are spawning in select tributaries to Lake Roosevelt. Water samples would be collected from a boat or on foot and samples would be taken to a contracted laboratory for analysis.

Also, acoustic telemetry receivers and acoustic tagged burbot would be used to help identify spawning locations. Receivers are small, data-logging computers anchored near the bottom of a lake or stream that "listen" for tagged fish. When a signal is identified, the tag's unique ID code is saved with the date and time.

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/ Ted Gresh
Ted Gresh
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 31, 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:

Lake Roosevelt Burbot Population Assessment

Project Site Description

The reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam, Lake Roosevelt, extends approximately 150 miles to the Canadian border with a total surface area of about 125 square miles. Activities would also occur in and around the tributaries that feed into Lake Roosevelt.

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> This project does not involve ground disturbance of any kind. If any new ground disturbance is proposed outside of disturbed areas, a cultural resource consultation would be initiated.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There is no ground disturbance associated with these actions. Therefore, there is no potential to affect 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 action does not include any vegetation management, ground disturbance, or actions that would significantly impact vegetation. Therefore, there is no potential to affect plant communities.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed actions would take place in the reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam. There would be no actions that would occur on upland areas; therefore, there is no potential to affect wildlife or wildlife habitat.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The capture of age 0 and age 1 burbot would be done using minnow traps, bongo nets, and trawls. Other native fish encountered during trapping would likely be red band trout, suckers, sculpins, whitefish, and yellow perch. The area where activities would occur is not suitable for bull trout and they have not been captured in the past. No other ESA-listed fishes are present in project area. Because activities would occur in the water column and the operators would keep the nets, including trawl nets, from snagging on the bottom, the bottom sediments would not be disturbed and would not result in any effects to habitat.		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project would not take place within or around wetlands and therefore, there is no potential to affect wetlands

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: There is no ground disturbance associated with this project and therefore, there is no potential to affect groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no changes to land use and no impacts to specially-designated areas and therefore, there is no potential to affect land use or specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no changes to visual quality associated with this project and therefore, there is no potential to impact visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A negligible amount of emissions would be generated by boats and other vehicles used for transportation.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: The project activities do not involve any new construction or new use of heavy equipment. A negligible amount of noise would be generated by boats and other vehicles used for transportation.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: All proposed actions involve working in and around water, which poses some risk to human health and safety. But all actions are standard and customary RM&E activities that follow specific guidance to ensure quality data and safe working conditions that would mitigate for that risk.

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: Project activities would occur on open water and no special permissions are required. If private lands are to be accessed, work would occur only after obtaining landowner approval.

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

Signed: /s/ Ted Gresh
Ted Gresh ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: March 31, 2020