

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YBSC Indian Creek West Side Wood Replenishment Project

Project No.: 1997-051-00

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 provide funding to support implementation of the Yakima Basin Side Channels (YBSC) Indian Creek Wood Placement Project located on Washington state-owned property in the Yakima Basin watershed. The project was partially completed in 2017. However, an inadvertent discovery of cultural resources delayed project implementation. Resuming the project would further increase floodplain function, enhance in-stream habitat complexity, improve riparian habitat, and increase groundwater recharge and stream flow. Activities associated with restoration activities in a project area east of the North Fork Teanaway Road were addressed in a previous categorical exclusion (CX) issued on October 8, 2020; this CX addresses work in an adjacent western project area.

Proposed work would include placement of about 25 logs consisting of small in-stream clumps, and loose floodplain placement along a 0.25-mile-long section of Indian Creek floodplain surfaces, west of North Fork Teanaway Road. Logs would be less than 14 inches diameter at breast height and are each about 40 feet long. Logs would be moved to stream and floodplain surfaces via hand tools, such as grip hoists, and a tractor-mounted skid winch. No new staging or road work would be needed to complete the work.

Inspection and maintenance of the project site would occur annually, and could result in minor on-site adjustments to wood placements, the addition of woody materials to the site, or additional vegetation planting and management within the boundary of the previously planted areas.

Funding for the proposed activities would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with both NMFS and USFWS on the O&M 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/ Claire McClory
Claire McClory
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Katey C. Grange</u>	<u>November 2, 2020</u>
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.

Proposed Action: YBSC Indian Creek West Side Wood Replenishment Projects

Project Site Description

The project is located within the North Cascades, Chiwaukum Hills and Lowland ecoregion. The project would occur in the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF), which is a 50,000-acre piece of Washington state-owned land that is managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in consultation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Indian Creek is identified as a high priority stream in the TCF Management Plan. The TCF Recreation Plan identifies the site as a Road and River Corridor, which allows for scenic driving and restoration practices that allow for river access for fishing, swimming, and day use.

The project area has been heavily degraded and hydrologically altered by railroad logging activities, livestock grazing, and other agricultural uses that resulted in substantial alterations to hydrological processes.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: BPA made a determination of no adverse effect to historic properties on January 18, 2017. The Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred on February 16, 2017 (BPA Log No. WA 2016 090).

After an inadvertent discovery and damage to known cultural resource sites occurred during 2017 construction, BPA worked with consulting parties to develop a Memorandum of Agreement to resolve adverse effects. Consulting parties included the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation), Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT), Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP), Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The MOA was signed by all parties on August 8, 2020.

On October 7, 2020, BPA updated consultation to include an additional access road at Indian Creek, located west of North Fork Teanaway Road. BPA sent a combined initiation of consultation and determination that the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected. WDNR concurred on October 8, 2020, DNR and CCT concurred on October 26, 2020, Yakama Nation concurred on October 30, 2020, and DAHP concurred on November 2, 2020.

Notes:

- A cultural resources monitor would be present during project implementation.
- Project implementation activities would occur outside of known site boundaries.
- In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribe's cultural staff, cultural committee, and DAHP notified.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Short-term impacts from soil compaction during log placement and in Indian Creek where heavy equipment would traverse the floodplain. Long-term gravel and sediment recruitment would improve soil conditions.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, plant species are known to be present. Temporary impacts, such as trampling grasses and plant cover would occur to existing vegetation during log placement.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed wildlife, are present within the project area. Minor, temporary impact to local wildlife from noise and vegetation removal would be limited to during construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project would encourage long-term floodplain reconnection to areas that have been historically altered by human influence.

No known state-listed or special-status species are present. ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead and bull trout are present within the project stream reaches. The project is covered under Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with Project Notification Form (PNF) number 2020105. The project would result in long-term net benefits to fish species within the project reach from increased habitat availability, floodplain access, and decreased summer stream temperatures.

Notes:

- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Long-term increase in floodplain access would benefit groundwater recharge and function.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impact to recreation users due to access limitations during construction in the immediate project area. The project would align with the TCF Road and River Corridor recreation designations by enhancing river process and function while maintaining long-term access to fishing and dispersed recreation and hiking within the TCF. The project would result in a long-term improvement to recreational opportunities in the area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor change to visual quality with the addition of wood on the floodplain. The project is not within a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in vehicle emissions and dust during construction. No long-term impacts to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in noise during daytime construction activities due to vehicles and equipment use. No long-term noise impacts.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact expected.

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: The YN operates under an existing MOA with WDNR and WDFW, which outlines a process for implementing habitat improvement projects on state lands in the Yakima Basin. WDFW completed a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determination of non-significance (DNS) for the initial wood loading project on July 15, 2016.

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

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory November 2, 2020
Claire McClory, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist