

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fox Reach/Silver Falls Piezometer Installation

Project No.: 2009-003-00

Project Manager: Tori Bohlen, EWU-4

Location: Chelan County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Yakama Nation to contract Wildlands, Inc. to install three piezometer wells along the alignment of a proposed channel along the Entiat River in the area of Fox Creek Campground to determine the soil profile and groundwater elevation, which would inform the design of potential habitat restoration projects. Funding the proposed activities fulfills ongoing commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp) and commitments specified in the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp) while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System (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.).

Three piezometer tubes with submersible data loggers would be installed along the alignment of the top, middle, and bottom of the proposed channel. The pits would be dug to a depth of 5 to 6 feet and no more than 3 feet in diameter using a 308 rubber tracked excavator, shovels, and brush-cutting hand tools. All excavated spoils would be placed back into the pits upon installation of the piezometer wells. Tubes would be cut to a foot above ground level. Sites would be accessed by foot. Some minimal clearing and grubbing with hand tools would be required to access the sites. The work would take one day to complete and would not require storing materials or equipment. Vehicles would be parked at one of the sites.

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/ Mandy Hope

Mandy Hope
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
ACS Professional Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange September 30, 2020

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.

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Project Site Description

The project area is located on US Forest Service (USFS)-managed land in north-central Washington, approximately 26 miles north-northwest of Chelan, WA, at an elevation of about 2,350 feet. The Entiat River, along which the piezometers would be installed, flows through a valley surrounded by forested mountains toward Box Canyon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The USFS is the lead federal agency for Section 106 consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Scoping was initiated by the USFS with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT) and the Yakama Nation in January 2020 in accordance with the programmatic agreement between the USFS and the State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the management of cultural resources on the National Forests in Washington State. The CCT concurred with the following: the area of potential effect (APE) as determined by the USFS; the determination that the project is an undertaking with the potential to impact cultural resources; the USFS's plan to conduct a preliminary literature review and pedestrian survey (this was completed in September 2020); and the provision that an archaeological monitor would be present onsite during piezometer installation. No comments were received from the Yakama Nation. BPA sent a letter to consulting parties on 9/29/20 to inform them of BPA's funding role. No response was required.

Notes:

- An archaeological monitor from the Yakama Nation would be present during piezometer installation.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In order to install the piezometers, soil would be displaced during pit excavation. The depth of soil disturbance would not exceed 6 feet. The pits would be backfilled following piezometer installation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plant species in the project area. Plants in the immediate vicinity of the project area would be subject to short-term impacts

as a result of brush cutting using hand tools in order to reach the piezometer installation sites. This would not be expected to have long-term impacts to plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: ESA-listed Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) and its critical habitat, and yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) have the potential to occur in the project area. Any potential impacts to ESA-listed species would be covered under USFS's ESA Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for Aquatic Restoration Activities in the States of Oregon, Washington and portions of California, Idaho and Nevada (collectively known as ARBO II), to minimize impacts to ESA-listed species.

Any impacts to non-listed wildlife species would be limited to the immediate area where there would be a temporary, small decrease in available habitat and temporary elevated noise disturbance.

Notes:

- The Yakama Nation and its contractor, Wildlands Inc., would adhere to all design features described in the USFS's ESA Section 7 ARBO II consultation to minimize impacts to ESA-listed species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Entiat River contains ESA-listed Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and steelhead (*O. mykiss*); however, the channel is dry during the time period when work is proposed (early October) and there would be no impact to fish species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands are not present in the project area. The proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Piezometers would be installed to a depth of 6 feet in order to measure groundwater levels. Water would not be withdrawn or diverted from the system.

Notes:

- Spill prevention measures would be present on site to prevent groundwater contamination.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Land use would not change as a result of the proposed action.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Visual quality would not change as a result of the proposed action.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with use of excavation equipment on site.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary noise increases associated with vehicles and excavation equipment.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and safety.

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 project area is owned and managed by the USFS, which is actively involved with the planning and permitting of the proposed action.

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

Signed: /s/ Mandy Hope

Mandy Hope, ECF-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
ACS Professional Staffing

September 30, 2020

Date