

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lake Roosevelt Data Collection

Project No.: 1994-043-00

Project Manager: Carlos Mathews, EWU-4

Location: Okanogan County, WA

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 fund the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STI) to conduct research and monitoring activities in Lake Roosevelt. The project's primary objectives are to monitor and evaluate the performance of the Lake Roosevelt artificial production program and to assess the impact of reservoir operations on the fishery and ecology of Lake Roosevelt. No changes in reservoir operations would occur as a result of this project.

The specific actions funded by BPA would be:

- Water quality analysis of chlorophyll and zooplankton communities.
- Fish collection using backpack electrofishing, boat electrofishing, and beach seining. Fish surveys would collect fish length, weight, identifying markings, origin, species, and diet data to assess wild and hatchery fish population status.
- Creel surveys to assess recruitment to the fishery using a reservoir-wide creel.
- Kettle River and its tributaries would be monitored for native redband trout, hatchery rainbow trout, wild kokanee, hatchery kokanee and burbot. Individuals would be weighed, measured, pit tagged, and fin clipped for genetic tissue samples.
- Acoustic study to assess redband rainbow trout reservoir dispersal and movement patterns. Fish would be monitored passively with 26 remote receiver stations placed through the middle and lower sections of the reservoir.

Funding the proposed activities supports 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/ Ted Gresh

Ted Gresh

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange July 7, 2021

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: Lake Roosevelt Data Collection

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

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action does not include any vegetation management, ground disturbance, or actions that would substantially impact vegetation. Therefore, there is no potential to affect plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Fish collection would be conducted using backpack electrofishing, boat electrofishing, and beach seining. Other native fish encountered would likely be suckers, sculpins,

whitefish, and yellow perch. Some by-catch is expected but most fish would be released safely. 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.

Activities would not result in any effects to water quality or floodplains.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

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

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

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

Potential for Significance: No

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

Potential for Significance: No

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

Potential for Significance: No

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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. The level of noise generated would be consistent with noise generated by other lake users.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

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 research, monitoring, and evaluation 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: 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: Project activities would occur on open water and no special permissions are required. Boats would be launched at existing, public launch facilities. 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 July 7, 2021
Ted Gresh, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist