Klickitat Hatchery Spring Chinook Upgrades Project

Finding of No Significant Impact
Bonneville Power Administration
DOE/EA-2207
August 2023

INTRODUCTION

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) announces its environmental findings for its proposal to fund capital improvements to existing facilities at the Klickitat Hatchery that would support an increase in spring Chinook salmon production from 600,000 to 800,000 smolts and allow the Yakama Nation to transition from a segregated to an integrated spring Chinook production program. The hatchery is operated jointly by the Yakama Nation and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The hatchery was built in 1954 and most of the facilities have not been renovated since initial construction. The upgrades would help BPA meet its commitments under the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] §§ 839 *et seq*.) as well as supporting BPA's commitments in the 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords Memorandum of Agreement that were reaffirmed in the subsequent amendments to the Columbia River Fish Accord Extension Agreement with the Yakama Nation and others.

BPA developed an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The EA was released for a 30-day public comment period beginning in April 2023. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommended the addition of estimated vehicle trips into the impacts analysis for air quality and inclusion of Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The Washington Department of Ecology recommended measures regarding water quality and erosion control. The same private citizen that expressed concerns during the scoping period about potential violations of the Northwest Power Act submitted a similar comment during the Draft EA review period echoing those concerns. Two other private citizens submitted comments containing various questions regarding resources discussed in the EA, including but not limited to spring Chinook population health, impacts to ESA-listed species, water quality effects, and climate change resiliency.

Based on the EA analysis and public comments received, BPA determined that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq*.). Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required, and BPA is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is not the type of action that normally requires preparation of an EIS and is not without precedent.

Attached is a Mitigation Action Plan that lists all the mitigation measures that BPA and its contractors are committed to implementing.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY

The FONSI will be posted on BPA's project website:
www.bpa.gov/nepa/klickitat-hatchery-upgrades

PROPOSED ACTION

Under the Proposed Action, BPA would implement the hatchery upgrades and production portion of the Klickitat River Spring Chinook Plan (Yakama Nation 2019)[1], developed by the Yakama Nation in cooperation with WDFW. The Proposed Action includes construction and upgrades to the Klickitat Hatchery that would allow for the successful holding and spawning of adult Chinook salmon, and for the rearing and annual release of up to 800,000 spring Chinook yearling smolts in an integrated hatchery where hatchery fish are more genetically similar to naturally-spawning fish.

Facility upgrades to support this level of integrated production would include replacement of the water supply pipeline from the spring water source; rehabilitation of an existing surface water pump station; repairs to the existing hatchery fishway; construction of new adult holding and spawning facilities, circular raceways, and a new distribution box to supply to them; and a new effluent treatment system. If available funding allows, BPA may also make improvements to the interior of the administration building, construct two new hatchery residences for hatchery workers, and install predator control netting on an existing raceway.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative, BPA would not fund any capital improvements and there would be no upgrades to hatchery operations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

To determine whether the Proposed Action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects, BPA analyzed the potential impacts of the proposal on human and natural resources and presented them in Chapter 3 of the EA. The potential impacts associated with the Proposed Action are summarized below. The Proposed Action, with implementation of selected mitigation measures, would have no significant impacts. The following discussion provides a summary of the Proposed Action's potential impacts and the reasons these impacts would not be significant.

Transportation

Impacts to transportation would not be significant.

- There would be a minimal increase in traffic from construction vehicles and workers, but these increases would be temporary and signage would be posted to notify the community of possible delays.
- The access road to the spring water intake would be graded for construction, allowing improved maintenance access.

Geology and Soils

Impacts to geology and soils would not be significant.

- Ground disturbance would be limited to minor excavation for saddle supports and thrust blocks for a new above-ground pipeline connecting the intake to the hatchery facilities.
- The construction contractor would be required to prepare an erosion control plan to minimize sediment runoff and fugitive dust.

[1] *Yakama Nation. February 2019. Appendix B: Klickitat Spring Chinook: Integrated Program Description, Analysis, and Implementation Schedule, updated February 2019. Yakama Nation, Toppenish, WA. 30 pages.*

Vegetation and Noxious Weeds

Impacts to vegetation and noxious weeds would not be significant.

- Temporary staging and equipment storage would be located in areas already disturbed and free of vegetation.
- Vegetation removal would be limited to brush and small trees along the existing access route to the upper and lower spring intakes and pipeline. The rest of the facility upgrades would be constructed in areas already cleared for existing hatchery operations.
- If the optional residences are constructed, three acres of vegetation would be cleared to allow for their construction, and disturbed soils would be reseeded and planted with native plant species.

Water Quantity, Rights, and Quality

Impacts to water quantity, rights, and quality would not be significant.

- The current diversion rate of 12 cubic feet per second (cfs) from the Indian Ford Spring A may be increased up to 16 cfs, which is within the amount allowed under the current water right.
- Construction activities closest to the Klickitat River would correspond with periods of lower flows to minimize the potential for sediment and contaminants to enter the river. Staging, refueling, and maintenance for all heavy equipment would be located at least 75 feet from surface waters, per conditions of the project's Yakama Nation Water Code Administration Hydraulic Permit.

Wetlands and Floodplains

Impacts to wetlands and floodplains would not be significant.

- No work, including removal/fill activities, would occur in wetlands.
- The only work that would occur within the floodplain of the Klickitat River would be the rehabilitation of the existing surface water pump station, which would be limited to in-kind replacement of parts and recoating surfaces.

Fish

Impacts to fish would not be significant.

- No in-stream work in the mainstem Klickitat River would occur during the proposed upgrades.
- The approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would require turbidity monitoring to ensure upland soil disturbances do not affect water quality conditions in the Klickitat River.
- The upgrades would facilitate implementation of the Yakama Nation's Spring Chinook Master Plan (Master Plan), which is expected to produce long-term benefits for the spring Chinook population in the Klickitat River Subbasin (Yakama Nation 2018[2]; Hess et al. 2011[3]) and would support an increased proportion of natural-origin broodstock that was determined by the Master Plan to be necessary to meet long-term harvest objectives.

Wildlife

Impacts to wildlife would not be significant.

- The construction at the Klickitat Hatchery would be expected to affect few wildlife species since these actions occur at an operational hatchery in already disturbed areas that provide little habitat. Disturbance from construction noise and activity would be temporary.

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[2] *Yakama Nation. 2018. Klickitat River Spring Chinook Master Plan. Prepared in cooperation with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Yakama Nation, Toppenish, WA.*

[3] *Hess, J., Matala, A., Zendt, J., Frederiksen, C., Sharp, W., and Narum, S. 2011. Introgressive hybridization among major Columbia River Chinook salmon (Oncorhynchus tshawytscha) lineages within the Klickitat River due to hatchery practices. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. 68. 1876-1891. 10.1139/F2011-107.*

- Increased production and release of salmon smolts could increase food availability for state priority species such as raptors.
- Tree removal would be scheduled outside of normal nesting season to minimize impacts to migratory birds and foraging and dispersal habitat for northern spotted owls in the project vicinity.

Recreation
Impacts to recreation would not be significant.

- The Proposed Action would have beneficial impacts on recreational fishing for sport fisherman. The increased production supported by the upgrades would yield an annual harvest of approximately 1,200 spring Chinook for sport or recreational purposes.
- River navigation would not be impeded at any time since no in-water work would occur in the Klickitat River.

Historic and Cultural Resources
Impacts to historic and cultural resources would not be significant.

- No exterior modifications are proposed for the hatchery administration building, which is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, that would compromise its architectural eligibility.
- A cultural monitor from the Yakama Nation would be present for construction activities that take place near avoidance areas.
- Increased salmon production may benefit traditional subsistence practices in the region.

Air Quality
Impacts to air quality would not be significant.

- There would be short-term effects from the construction activities, but the application of mitigation measures would limit the amount of temporary fugitive dust and vehicle and equipment emissions from this construction. Temporary increases in pollutants would not exceed applicable air quality standards.

Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
Impacts to greenhouse gases would not be significant.

- The Proposed Action's contribution to climate change would be from the release of exhaust gases from construction vehicles necessary for construction of the facility upgrades. The application of mitigation measures would limit the amount of exhaust produced by vehicles and equipment from these actions.
- The facility upgrades would increase health and resiliency of the native spring Chinook population in a changing climate through improved hatchery conditions.

Visual Quality
Impacts to visual quality would not be significant.

- The proposed project footprint is only slightly larger than the existing facilities and would be consistent with the existing level of disturbance.

Noise
Impacts to noise would not be significant.

- Though noise would be generated by construction equipment during the approximately 16 months of construction, the topography and dense vegetation surrounding the site would

reduce the distance sound will travel. In addition, the nearest residence to the hatchery is over three miles away and would likely not notice construction noise.

Public Health and Safety

Impacts to public health and safety would not be significant.

- To ensure that communication service is maintained during construction, the construction contractor would provide a separate telephone line and internet access.
- The public would have limited access to the project area during construction activities and there would be no impacts to the general public.
- There may be short-term, adverse, low impacts to construction workers and hatchery employees due to increased hazardous materials such as concrete, diesel, and fuel and while traveling to and from the project area. Best management practices such as preparation of a safety plan, worker training, and spill prevention measures would minimize those risks.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice

Impacts to socioeconomics and environmental justice would not be significant.

- There would be short-term economic benefits (wages and construction-related local purchases) associated with the construction activity.
- In accordance with Yakama Nation Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance, jobs created by the project could benefit Native American workers.
- Although the Yakama Nation is an Indian Tribe and there are low-income and minority populations on the Yakama Nation Reservation, the Proposed Action would not result in disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards to either the Yakama Nation or any low-income or minority populations.
- The increase in hatchery production may provide long term benefits to the Yakama Nation by enhancing fish populations and harvest opportunities, improving ecosystem health, and supporting traditional subsistence diets and economic activities.

DETERMINATION

Based on the information in the EA, as summarized here, BPA determines that the Proposed Action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq*.). Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared and BPA is issuing this FONSI for the Proposed Action.

Finally, consistent with Department of Energy's regulations in 10 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1022 *et seq.* (*Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements*), the Proposed Action would not result in significant impacts to any wetlands as referenced above and presented in Chapter 3 of the EA. Consistent with 10 CFR § 1022.12 and 1022.13, all impacts to the floodplain from the project have been assessed and proper notification provided. As discussed in 10 CFR § 1022.14, Chapter 2 of the Klickitat Hatchery Spring Chinook Upgrades Final EA includes a description of the Project Action, including a map identifying the location of the construction activities; the alternatives; and proposed mitigation measures to avoid and mitigate any potential impacts from these actions. Because the only work planned in the Klickitat River floodplain would be the rehabilitation of the existing surface water pump station, which would be limited to in-kind replacement of parts and recoating surfaces, no additional floodplain impacts are expected.

Issued in Portland, Oregon.

SCOTT ARMENTROUT

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