

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Lamprey RM&E Activities

**Project No.:** 2008-470-00 and 1994-026-00

**Project Manager:** Debbie Docherty– EWM- 4

**Location:** Yakima, Walla Walla, Asotin, Columbia, Garfield Kittitas, Yakima, and Benton Counties in Washington; Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties in Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B3.3 - Research related to conservation of fish and wildlife.

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to continue funding the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN) for annual ongoing work focusing on research, monitoring, and evaluation (RM&E) projects that are implemented under tribally-sponsored fish and wildlife programs (project sponsors) consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's (Council) Fish and Wildlife Program. These activities fulfill commitments begun under the 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords and the 2018 Accord Extension MOA. The proposed project activities for CTUIR have been ongoing since 1994 and for YN since 2008.

Lamprey RM&E activities conducted by the YN as part of the proposed action would be:

**Adult Lamprey collection and tagging:** Adult lamprey are collected at in the lamprey passage facilities at Bonneville Dam, John Day Dam, and The Dalles Dam. Lamprey would be PIT tagged then translocated into the Yakima, Wenatchee, Methow and Klickitat subbasin. Approximately 50 adults (25 males and 25 females) would be held (over winter) at Prosser Hatchery and would be used for lab research.

**Lamprey ammocete surveys:** Surveys would be conducted to determine presence/absence of ammocetes in the Yakima, Wenatchee, Methow and Klickitat subbasins. Electrofishing and eDNA sampling would be used to determine presence, absence and relative abundance of larval lamprey. Ammocetes that are large enough (>100mm) would also be PIT tagged then released.

**Maintain and monitor lamprey passage structures.** Conduct regular site visits to Roza Dam lamprey passage structure to insure that all systems are functioning properly. Maintain cameras and footage to augment monitoring of lamprey passage. Data would be downloaded from the camera daily and viewed for observational data collection.

Lamprey RM&E activities conducted by the CTUIR as part of the proposed action would be:

**Adult lamprey collection and tagging:** Adult lamprey are collected at in the lamprey passage facilities at Bonneville Dam, John Day Dam, and The Dalles Dam, which are inaccessible to all other

fish species. Collected lamprey would be PIT tagged then translocated into the Umatilla and Grand Ronde subbasin.

**Monitor out-migrating lamprey:** Juvenile lamprey collected at a rotary screw trap below Three Mile Falls Dam and West Extension Irrigation juvenile bypass system would be tagged and released into the Umatilla River.

**Lamprey ammocete surveys:** Surveys would be conducted to determine presence/absence of ammocetes in the Umatilla, Grand Ronde, Walla Walla, Tucannon and John Day sub basins. Electrofishing and eDNA sampling would be used to determine presence, absence and relative abundance of larval lamprey. Ammocetes that are large enough (>100mm) would also be PIT tagged then released.

**Adult lamprey population survey:** Adult lamprey would be counted in the in the Lamprey Passage Structure (LPS) at Three Mile dam. Data from this survey is used to estimate the number of adult lamprey entering the Umatilla River.

**Maintain and monitor lamprey passage structures.** Conduct regular site visits to Three Mile Dam LPS, Maxwell Diversion LPS, and Feed Diversion LPS lamprey passage structure to insure that all systems are functioning properly.

**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 - ECF - 4  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

July 27, 2020

Katey Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date

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:** Lamprey RM&E Activities

## **Project Site Description**

RM&E activities would be located in the Umatilla and Grand Ronde basin in Oregon and the Yakima, Walla Walla, and Tucannon Basins in Washington. Some adult collection would also occur at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day Dams on the Columbia River.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbing activities or modifications to structures, thus the proposed activities would not have the potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources. All work would be carried out at existing field sites.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbing activities proposed, thus the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect geology and soils. All work would be carried out at existing field sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbing or vegetation removal activities proposed. All work would be carried out at existing sites

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbing or other activity that may affect wildlife or wildlife habitat is proposed. Field crews from 1-3 people hiking with backpacks would yield avoidance or minor disturbance through human presence of walking through the woods. There would be no effect on federally or state-listed sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation:

There would be no impact to adjacent waterbodies or floodplains because no ground disturbing activities are proposed. No new RM&E equipment would be installed. All work would be carried out at existing field sites.

Some activities have the potential to affect other fish species besides lamprey and there would be brief handling of those fish prior to release

Any unintentional handling of ESA listed species during monitoring activities not entailing electrofishing has been reviewed and approved by either the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through Section 7 consultation of the issuance of a Section 10 permit (CTUIR/YN via Section-10 permit 15549-2R issued 4/19/2016 expires 4/19/2021; WCR-2017-7615 issued in 2018 with no expiration date). Bull Trout are not present at the sites, so a No Effect Determination was made for these activities.

Electrofishing to collect ammocetes would be done using the minimal voltage necessary for effective capture of ammocetes. The low voltages used have been shown to have no effect on listed salmonids and other non-listed species. In addition, habitats are shallow, depositional areas, where non-target species can be seen and avoided. For these reasons BPA has made a No Effect determination for all ESA listed species from these activities.

Adult lamprey would be collected at Bonneville Dam, John Day Dam, and The Dalles Dam behind picketed leads in areas that are inaccessible to other fish. For this reason BPA has made a No Effect determination for all ESA listed species from these activities.

## **6. Wetlands**

**Potential for Significance: No**

Explanation: No ground disturbing activities are proposed; thus, the action does not have the potential to impact wetlands. All work would be carried out at the existing field sites.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance planned; activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Access to field sites is on existing road networks and all activities would be compatible with local land use on public roads, public lands or CTUIR and YN tribal lands.

## **9. Visual Quality**

### **10. Potential for Significance: No**

Explanation: All proposed activities would not impact visual quality.

## **11. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be carried out at the existing field sites and would have no effect on air quality. Any increase in emissions from vehicles accessing field sites would be very minor and short term.

## **12. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work activities would be carried out from within existing facilities or the existing field sites and would not result in an increase in ambient noise.

### 13. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be carried out at existing sites. Workers carrying the proposed actions of RM&E activities are trained in proper equipment management techniques. This activity is not considered hazardous nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the general public.

#### **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: CTUIR and YN implements most work at existing facilities and field work at established sites that are accessed on existing public roads and tribal lands. In some cases CTUIR and YN has secured standing agreements for permission from private landowners to participate in the Lamprey RM&E program.

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 27, 2020  
Ted Gresh, ECF-4 Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist