

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: PIT Tagging Wild Chinook Project

Project No.: 1991-028-00

Project Manager: Deborah Docherty

Location: Multiple counties, Idaho and Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration proposes to fund the National Marine Fisheries Service to assess the migrational characteristics and estimate parr-to-smolt survival for Snake River wild spring/summer Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) at Lower Granite Dam; characterize parr and smolt survival and movement out of natal rearing areas of selected streams; and examine the relationships among fish movement, environmental conditions within the streams, weather, and climate data.

The proposed actions would include:

1. Collection (via seining or electrofishing) and tagging of wild Snake River spring/summer Chinook juveniles
2. Data collection including but not limited to: installing stream gauges and PIT tag arrays; conducting snorkel surveys; conducting aerial surveys (e.g. drones, airplanes, helicopter); conducting site assessments (e.g. pebble counts, elevation surveys); carcass surveys; redd counts; ongoing data collection).

These activities fulfil some of Bonneville's commitments begun under the 2008 NMFS Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion (as supplemented in 2010 and 2014) (2008 BiOp) and ongoing commitments under the 2019 NMFS Columbia River System BiOp (2019 CRS BiOp).

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), Bonneville 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, Bonneville finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 3, 2020

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

All activities would occur within the Lower Snake River and Salmon River subbasins in Idaho and Washington.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The actions proposed by this project would not impact historic or cultural resources, or the action would occur at existing infrastructure.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils would not be impacted by the proposed activities.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no ground disturbing actions planned and there are no anticipated impacts to any plant species, and no ESA-listed species exist within the immediate area of impact.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The collection and survey activities would not cause anticipated impacts to any wildlife species, and no listed species exist within the immediate area of impact.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project activities would involve the direct and indirect take of several listed species (Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout). The project would consult with National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service as needed. Other, non-listed species may be collected as bycatch, but this would not result in significant impacts. Project personnel also assist with data collection during ODFW sampling efforts and would not handle listed species. The activities would not impact waterbodies or floodplains.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The activities would not impact wetlands.		
7. Groundwater and Aquifers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.		

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



Explanation: The activities would not impact or change land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The activities would not impact visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The work would not impact air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise levels may be increased, but this would only occur during the normal working hours of the study period.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Safety regulations would be followed as necessary.

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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: This work would be implemented at existing facilities or on public lands.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

Date: June 3, 2020

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Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
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