

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YTAHP Parke Creek at Alkali Heights and Flats Pipeline Project

Project No.: 2007-398-00

Project Manager: Michelle O'Malley – EWU-4

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

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 Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD), a member of the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP) work group, to implement the Parke Creek at Alkali Heights and Flats Fish Passage Additional Pipeline Project on private land near Ellensburg, Washington. Parke Creek is utilized by Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead, Chinook and coho salmon, and a suite of native resident fishes. ESA-listed bull trout are present in the Yakima River and may utilize the lower reaches of Parke Creek for overwintering habitat.

The project proposes to install about 0.3 miles (about 1,400 feet) of 4- to 10-inch-diameter pipeline to convey the irrigation water from a new pump diversion located on the stream bank of Parke Creek at River Mile 0.8 to a nearby agricultural field. All access and staging would occur via existing roads and previously disturbed areas. All areas disturbed during construction would be planted with native vegetation. KCCD would implement the work during the winter of 2021-2022.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System, while also supporting 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/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange January 4, 2022

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 site encompasses about 1.3 acres of land near Parke Creek located approximately 6 miles southeast of Ellensburg, Washington. Parke Creek is a tributary to the Wilson/Cherry Creek system, which is a tributary to the Yakima River at RM 147. This area lies within the Wilson Creek – Cherry Creek Subwatershed of the Upper Yakima River Subbasin. The legal description is T17N, R19E, Sec 21. The project site is irrigated commercial agricultural crop production (timothy hay), and the surrounding area is irrigated agricultural crop production and grazing.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA consulted with DAHP and the Yakama Nation on a revised APE for the pipeline activities and a modified Section 106 process for the revised APE on November 9, 2021. DAHP concurred with the revised APE and modified Section 106 process on November 9, 2021. The Yakama Nation responded requesting an inventory of the revised APE on November 10, 2021. BPA conducted an inventory and consulted with DAHP and the Yakama Nation on a determination of no historic properties affected and recommendation to monitor during project implementation and to develop an unanticipated discovery plan on December 1, 2021. DAHP concurred with the determination and recommendations on December 1, 2021. No additional response was received from the Yakama Nation during the 30-day consult period.

Notes:

- A cultural resources monitor shall be present during excavation for the pipeline and an unanticipated discovery plan shall be in place.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to soil from excavation during installation of the pipeline activities. Best management practices would be followed to minimize disturbance of soils during project implementation. Post construction planting would re-establish areas of disturbed soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed, plant species are known to be present. The project would remove existing vegetation (timothy hay) from excavation during installation of the pipeline and result in temporary impacts during equipment crushing some plants while accessing work areas (about 0.3 mile; 0.6 acres). Post construction planting would re-establish areas of removed and disturbed vegetation; these areas would be planted back to timothy hay to match the rest of the agricultural production area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed wildlife species or habitats, are known to be present. Temporary impacts to area wildlife would occur from increased noise and vehicle traffic during construction. Wildlife would likely avoid the area during this time and return once the project work is completed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose changes to water bodies or floodplains, or impacts to special-status fish or their habitats; activities would occur on dry land.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose new wells or use of groundwater; spill prevention measures would be present on site during use of construction equipment.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose changes to land use; the area would retain its designation as farmland.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor change to visual quality from installation of the additional pipeline. The new conditions would be visually consistent with the topography of the surrounding area. Construction equipment would be visually consistent with agricultural equipment. The project is not within a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be short-term construction noise during daylight hours. Construction noise would not be noticeably different than agricultural production noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project sponsor is required to use best management practices to protect worker health and safety. Any activities involving hazardous materials would be disposed of at a designated hazardous waste facility.

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: Implementation of project activities would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor, KCCD, has coordinated with the underlying landowner and irrigation water users and has permission to conduct project activities.

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

Signed: /s/ Brenda Aguirre January 4, 2022
Brenda Aguirre, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist