

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project - Taneum Cedar Meadow Floodplain Restoration Project

Project No.: 1997-051-00

Project Manager: Michelle O'Malley

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: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to provide funding to support implementation of the Yakama/Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP) - Taneum Cedar Meadow Floodplain Restoration Project (Project) located in the Yakima Basin watershed. BPA funds would contribute about 40 percent of overall project costs and the Salmon Recovery Board would provide cost share for the remaining 60 percent. The Project would restore floodplain storage capacity and connectivity, increase riparian function, encourage secondary channel development, and restore instream habitat complexity for steelhead, coho, and resident trout. Funding the proposed activities fulfills ongoing commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System (CRS) Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp). These proposed activities also fulfill commitments specified in the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service CRS BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp).

Construction activities would include loose placement of about 150 logs and slash instream and on the floodplain of a 0.5 mile-long stretch of Taneum Creek at River Mile 11. Six instream log jams would be installed using an excavator to remove soil from the streambed and streambanks, place logs, and backfill them for ballast. Log structures would deflect streamflow, encourage secondary channel development and activation, and increase instream habitat complexity. About 50 cubic yards of soil excavation would be needed at the inlet of an existing secondary channel on river right. Excavating the inlet would increase frequency and duration of flows to secondary channels and the floodplain surface. Excess spoils would be used as ballast in log jams and redistributed on natural bars throughout the project area.

Site access would be from West Taneum Road and Forest Service Road 3300. Temporary access roads within the project area would be established to transport logs and heavy equipment. Equipment staging and refueling would be located more than 150 feet from the stream channel and refueling would occur outside of the floodplain. After construction is complete, soils would be de-compacted and topped with weed-free straw mulch to minimize erosion potential. Native seeding would be planted in disturbed areas. Large boulders would be placed at common access points along West Taneum Road to discourage unauthorized vehicles from accessing the project area.

All ground-disturbing activities would occur during the designated in-water work window of August 1st to September 30th. Excavation associated with the wood structures would be completed in the dry with no disturbance to flowing water. Inspection and maintenance of the project site would occur annually, and could result in minor on-site adjustments to wood placements, the addition of woody materials to the site, or additional vegetation planting and management.

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/ Claire McClory

Claire McClory
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>August 12, 2020</u>
Sarah T. Biegel	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: Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project - Taneum Cedar Meadow Floodplain Restoration Project

Project Site Description

The Taneum Cedar Meadow project site is located within the North Cascades, Chiwaukum Hills and Lowlands ecoregion. The Project would occur on Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)-owned and managed property. The project area is used primarily for recreation, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

The project area is within a segment of Taneum Creek that has been heavily degraded and hydrologically altered by logging activities, livestock grazing, and other agricultural uses. These historical uses have reduced floodplain function and roughness, and weakened the riparian corridor such that Taneum Creek has become a straightened and incised channel with limited floodplain access. The project area is within a flat, open, disconnected floodplain dominated by non-native weeds and grasses. Grand fir and Douglas-fir dominated forest surrounds the property. Riparian shrubs such as willow, red osier dogwood, serviceberry, and alders are also common within the floodplain.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA made a determination of no adverse effect to historic properties on May 4, 2020 (WA 2019 062). The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation concurred on May 4, 2020, the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred on May 5, 2020, and WDFW concurred on May 11, 2020. No response was received from the Yakama Nation.

Notes:

- In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribe's cultural staff and cultural committee and DAHP notified.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to soil from increased erosion potential during construction and grading activities. Sediment control BMPs would be installed prior to project implementation to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or excessive runoff during construction. Post construction seeding and mulching would further minimize erosion potential.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, plant species are known to be present. Temporary impacts to existing vegetation during grading activities. Post construction seeding and monitoring would re-establish native upland and riparian plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts to local wildlife from noise and vegetation removal expected. Northern spotted owl (NSO) critical habitat is present within the project area. NSO management circles (a state-designated listed) within the project area are monitored annually by WDFW staff with no recent detections. The project is covered under the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with Project Notification Form (PNF) number 2020061.

Notes:

- Loud equipment use from chainsaws would occur outside of the NSO critical nesting period of March 1st to July 15th. No helicopter use proposed for this action.
- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including construction timing and equipment use restrictions in NSO critical habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project would provide up to 5 acres of long-term floodplain reconnection to areas that have been historically altered by human influence.

No known state-listed special-status species present. ESA-listed fish species include Middle Columbia River steelhead and bull trout. The project is covered under the HIP Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with PNF number 2020061. The project would result in long-term net benefits to fish species within the project reach from increased habitat availability, floodplain access, and decreased summer stream temperatures.

Less than 50 cubic yards of material would be permanently removed from secondary channel relics to encourage secondary channel activation. All dredged materials would be used as ballast for wood structures, or placed throughout the project area where stream materials naturally accumulate.

Notes:

- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including turbidity monitoring requirements and in-water work timing.
- The Project Sponsor would adhere to all avoidance and minimization efforts identified in the Clean Water Act Sections 401 and 404 permit (NWS-2020-644) and Hydraulic Approval Permit (20219) issued for this project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands present in the project area (Taneum Cedar Meadow Floodplain Enhancement Project Wetland Delineation Report, Tetra Tech, June 2020).

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor impacts to groundwater during construction excavation within the floodplain. Long-term increase in floodplain access would benefit groundwater recharge and function.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impact to recreation users due to access limitations during construction in the immediate project area. Boulder barriers placed after construction would result in long-term reduction in unauthorized vehicular access to the project area. No long-term changes to authorized land uses.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor change to visual quality with the addition of wood and slash on the floodplain. The project is not within a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in vehicle emissions and dust during construction. No long-term impacts to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in noise during daytime construction activities due to vehicles and equipment use. No long-term impacts due to noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact expected.

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 pre exist 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: The Yakama Nation has been working with WDNR to obtain a land use license for conducting the proposed work on WDNR property.

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

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory August 12, 2020
Claire McClory, ECF-4 date
Environmental Protection Specialist