

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Chinook and Steelhead Monitoring in Shitike Creek and Warm Springs River

Project No.: 2008-311-00

Project Manager: Corrie Veenstra

Location: Jefferson and Wasco counties, Oregon

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 Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO) to monitor spring Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and summer steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*) populations within the Deschutes River subbasin, including research and monitoring in conjunction with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The proposed actions would include:

1. Operation and maintenance and collection of data passive integrated transponder (PIT) arrays and rotary screw traps.
2. Sampling and tagging spring Chinook and steelhead.
3. Assist ODFW staff with data collection and mark-recapture studies of returning fall Chinook at Sherars Falls.
4. Surveys, including but not limited to: installing stream gauges and PIT tag arrays; conducting snorkel surveys; conducting airplane surveys; conducting site assessments (e.g. pebble counts, elevation surveys); carcass surveys; redd counts; and ongoing data collection.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills ongoing commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp). These proposed activities also fulfill commitments specified in the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp). Additionally, the proposed activities are consistent with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program as authorized by the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act and the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.

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/ 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 _____ August 26, 2020

Sarah T. Biegel
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.

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Project Site Description

All activities would occur at sites with existing access and associated structures (traps, PIT arrays, etc.) and located on property owned or managed by the CTWSRO or ODFW in the Deschutes River subbasin in Jefferson and Wasco counties, Oregon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by, nor any historic structures near, this project. Therefore, actions proposed by this project would not impact historic or cultural resources; the action would occur at existing infrastructure.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, geology and soils would not be impacted by the proposed activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project and there are no anticipated impacts to any plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The actions would not impact wildlife within the project area and there would be no effect.

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

Potential for Significance: No, with conditions

Explanation: Fish research on hatchery-origin and wild-origin anadromous salmonids is a common and wide-spread activity within the Columbia River Basin, and these project activities would involve the direct and indirect take of several listed species (Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout). The ESA

coverage for handling listed fish would be secured through Section-10 permits from the National Marine Fisheries Service and under a Section 6 cooperative agreement with ODFW and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Project personnel also assist with data collection during ODFW sampling efforts and would not handle listed species during those tasks. There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, actions proposed would not impact waterbodies or floodplains.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the activities would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts only as personnel are working at sites. The activities would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts as personnel travel to work sites. The activities would not significantly impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise levels may be slightly increased over background levels, but this would only occur temporarily during the normal working hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

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: NA

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

Explanation: NA

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: NA

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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: This work would be implemented with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on properties owned by Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon or Oregon state 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 August 26, 2020

Israel Duran, ECF-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT