

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Grays River Confluence North Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

**Project No.:** 2010-073-00

**Project Manager:** Anne Creason – EWL-4

**Location:** Wahkiakum County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to provide funding to the Columbia Land Trust (CLT) for the purchase of the Grays River Confluence North property, which consists of approximately 24 acres located near the town of Rosburg in Wahkiakum County, Washington. BPA would hold a conservation easement to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat. BPA would also provide stewardship funds to CLT toward land management and maintenance of the property. The funding would be provided as part of BPA's ongoing efforts to protect, restore, and enhance habitat for threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the 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 Federal Columbia River Power System (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.).

The property consists of riparian and floodplain habitat within Grays Bay and Crooked Creek that would benefit all species of salmon and steelhead. CLT would develop a land management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property. The land management plan would be drafted within 18 months of closing. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

**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.

Travis D. Kessler

Travis D. Kessler  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient CRGT, Inc.

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>December 17, 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:** Grays River Confluence North Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

## **Project Site Description**

The Grays River Confluence North property consists of two parcels (approximately 24 acres) located at the confluence of Crooked Creek and Grays Bay on the Columbia River, immediately north of Crooked Creek in Wahkiakum County, Washington. The site includes riparian and floodplain habitat along Crooked Creek and lies adjacent to tidal estuarine habitat along Grays Bay that would benefit all species of juvenile salmon and steelhead. The vegetation on the site consists of forested, scrub-shrub and emergent species. Site topography is generally level and low, with a hillside on the east of the property near Altoona-Pillar Rock Road.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition, which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement. To the extent that future activities on the property may have an effect, it is expected that CLT would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

### **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: Notification letters will be sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties at a minimum of 15 days before the closing date of the sale. Advertisements would also be posted in local newspapers, and information would be posted on BPA's public website prior to closing.

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

Signed: /s/ Travis D. Kessler December 17, 2020  
Travis Kessler, ECF-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient CRGT, Inc.