

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Craig Mountain Land Exchange

**Project No.:** 1995-057-00

**Project Manager:** Sandra Fife

**Location:** Nez Perce and Lewis Counties, Idaho

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.24 Property transfers

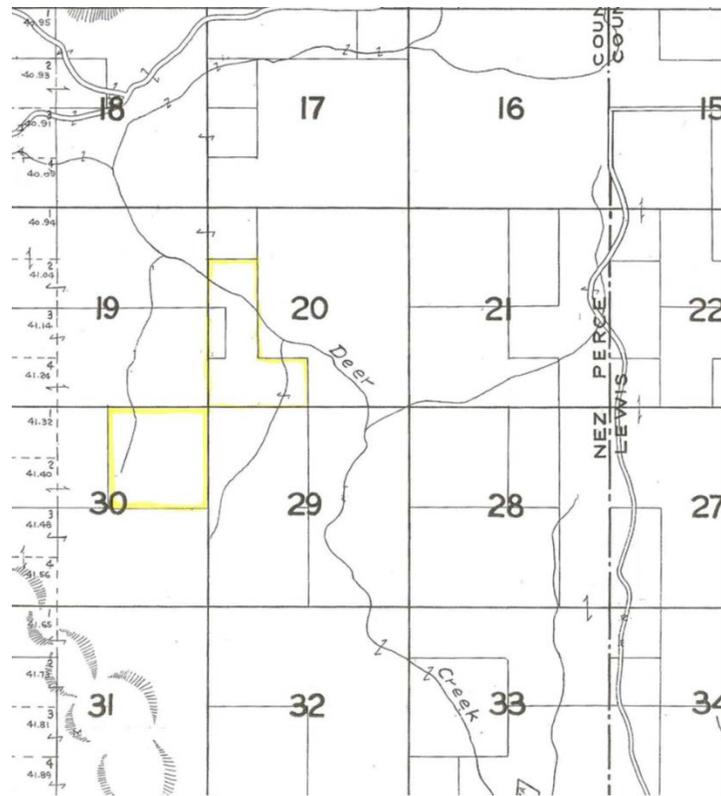
**Description of the Proposed Action:** In 1992, the 540-acre Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit was purchased by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) under terms of the 1992 Dworshak Dam Mitigation Agreement among BPA, the State of Idaho, and the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT). This property was provided to the State of Idaho as partial mitigation for wildlife losses associated with the 1971 inundation of wildlife habitat along the North Fork Clearwater River resulting from construction of Dworshak Dam, and became part of the larger Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA). The Proposed Action is a land exchange between the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and a private landowner, in which the Peter T. Johnson Unit will be exchanged for the Heitstuman parcel, located approximately 3 miles south-southwest of the IDFG-owned parcel.

The Heitstuman property is located about 3 miles south of the Soldiers Meadow Reservoir in Nez Perce and Lewis Counties, ID. The 360-acre property consists of a 320-acre parcel and a 40-acre parcel. To fulfill its promises to BPA under the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement, Idaho is recording a covenant running with the land in lieu of a conservation easement.

Acquiring this property would serve as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System, which includes dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers. Idaho would use this real property for the public purposes of mitigation, for permanent protection and enhancement of wildlife and wildlife habitat, and to allow public access that is reasonable in light of these purposes. Idaho acquired this real property to assist BPA in partially fulfilling BPA's duty to protect, mitigate, and enhance wildlife habitat affected by the development of the Federal Columbia River Power System as required by section 4(h)(10)(A) of the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980, 16 U.S.C. §§ 839 et. seq.

The CMWMA consists of temperate grassland, meadow, and shrubland, as well as a smaller portion of riparian and mesic meadow habitat. The IDFG has developed a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property (CMWMA Management Plan, 2014). The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the covenant and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

Figure 1. Public Land Survey Map Showing the Heitstuman Property (Yellow Outline)



**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/ Kelly Hope

Kelly Hope  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
ACS Professional Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 25, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Craig Mountain Land Exchange

## Project Site Description

The topography of the Heitstuman property is gentle to very steep terrain. Elevation within the subject property ranges from a low of near 4,360 feet where Deer Creek exits the property in the NW¼ of Section 20 to a high of about 4,930 feet in the NE¼ of Section 30 (see Figure 1). The property is a mix of open and lightly timbered range with some meadow. The portion of the property in Section 20 is generally a northeasterly aspect facing Deer Creek, tributary to the Salmon River. Deer Creek enters the subject property near the northwest quarter of Section 20 flowing in a southeasterly direction across the property for a little more than a ¼ mile. The part of the property in Section 30 sits atop a small plateau with panoramic vistas in all directions. Much of the property is accessible to ATV travel across gentle terrain and native-surfaced skid roads originally constructed to haul logs.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition, which includes transfer of title and the creation of a covenant. To the extent that future activities on the property may have an effect, it is expected that the IDFG would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
6. <b>Wetlands</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
7. <b>Groundwater and Aquifers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		

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

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

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, 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:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Due to the nature of this land exchange, public notification is not required. Both the parcel to be exchanged and the parcel to be gained are owned by the IDFG. The Proposed Action would not change the current use of either parcel. Additionally, there are no nearby landowners who could be affected by this transaction.

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

Signed: /s/ Kelly Hope  
Kelly Hope – EC-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
ACS Professional Staffing

Date: February 25, 2020