

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Genetic M&E Program for Salmon and Steelhead Project

**Project No.:** 1989-096-00

**Project Manager:** Brady Allen

**Location:** Multiple locations in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho

**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 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's ongoing monitoring and evaluation of genetic characteristics of supplemented salmonid populations. The project monitors genetic changes associated with hatchery propagation in multiple Snake River sub-basins for Chinook salmon and steelhead, reproductive success for individual families and groups of fish, and investigate the efficacy of using eDNA to measure population-level allele frequencies.

The actions would specifically satisfy some of BPA's Columbia River hatchery mitigation commitments begun under the 2008 NMFS' Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion (as supplemented in 2010 and 2014) (2008 BiOp) and ongoing commitments under the 2019 NMFS' Columbia River System BiOp (2019 CRS BiOp).

Co-managers are Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Nez Perce Tribe, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Idaho department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (Tribes).

Project actions would include:

1. Electrofishing: collection of fish Tier 2 and Tier 3 sites for genetic analysis of tissue samples.
2. Operation of the Little Sheep Creek smolt trap.

Tier 2 sites use changes in gene frequencies through time in hatchery, natural and wild Chinook salmon and steelhead populations to evaluate the genetic effects of hatchery supplementation on a broad geographic scale. Tier 3 sites involve direct measures of the relative reproductive success of hatchery fish spawning in the wild by using parentage analysis to construct pedigrees.

**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/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 5, 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.

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## Project Site Description

Trapping and electrofishing would occur within the Snake River Basin, primarily on the Imnaha, Grande Ronde, and Salmon river basins throughout Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Sample processing would occur in existing facilities and labs.

## 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> The proposed activities would not require any ground-disturbing or building modification activities for the completion of this work.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Ground disturbance is not planned.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would no vegetation disturbance and no anticipated impacts to any sensitive plant species.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no anticipated impacts to any sensitive wildlife species. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed by elevated human presence during collection activities.		
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> Sites would be located near bodies of water. However, the proposed work would not require any activities that would impact water or floodplains for the completion of the work. The work involves handling Federally-listed Snake River Chinook and steelhead; take is authorized under NMFS ESA Sec 10 permit (series 13382) and USFWS (14420-2009-F-0492).		
6. <b>Wetlands</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Wetlands would not be impacted.		
7. <b>Groundwater and Aquifers</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground excavation is planned and the work would not affect groundwater or aquifers.		

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



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

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The work would not impact visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Although there would be some emissions from travel to and from the study sites, air quality would not be affected by this work.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: The work would not raise noise levels above background.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



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, 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: This work would be implemented on property or sites that are owned and/or managed by the previously identified co-managers.

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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/ Israel Duran Date: May 5, 2020  
Israel Duran ECF-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient/CRGT