

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lake Roosevelt Sturgeon Recovery Project

Project No.: 1995-027-00

Project Manager: Carlos Matthew

Location: Okanogan County, WA

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:

Sub-yearling (juvenile) assessments would be conducted to detect natural recruitment, evaluate the conservation aquaculture program, estimate survival, and assess distribution, condition, growth, age, and behavior of wild and hatchery origin juvenile sturgeon in the U.S. portion of the upper Columbia River.

Adult white sturgeon stock assessment monitoring would be conducted cooperatively with Upper Columbia White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative (UCWSRI) and Lake Roosevelt research and project partners to determine abundance of white sturgeon in the Transboundary Reach.

Telemetry monitoring would provide information on U.S. spawning areas and identify important seasonal habitats and patterns of sturgeon movement in the Roosevelt and Transboundary reaches as part of a cooperative UCWSRI Transboundary Telemetry and Data Management Project.

White sturgeon larvae (approximately 10-14 days post-hatch) would be collected throughout the spawning period using specially modified D-ring sample nets. The fish would be transferred to and reared at the Hatchery.

Annually PIT-tag up to 4,000 juvenile white sturgeon at Sherman Creek Hatchery prior to transferring them for release in Lake Roosevelt in March.

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/ Ted Gresh

Ted Gresh ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 13, 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: Lake Roosevelt Sturgeon Recovery Project

Project Site Description

Wild larvae would be collected from the upper Columbia River in the Transboundary Reach between Lake Roosevelt and the Canadian border.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Explanation: This project does not involve ground disturbance of any kind. If any new ground disturbance is proposed outside of disturbed areas, a cultural resource consultation would be initiated.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation: There is no ground disturbance associated with these actions. Therefore, there is no potential to affect geology and soils.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation: The proposed action does not include any vegetation management, ground disturbance, or actions that would significantly impact vegetation. Therefore, there is no potential to affect plant communities.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation: The proposed actions would take place in the reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam. There would be no actions that would occur on upland areas; therefore, there is no potential to affect wildlife or wildlife habitat.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation: The capture of sub-yearling sturgeon would be done by gill nets. Other native fish encountered during trapping would likely be red band trout, suckers, sculpins, whitefish, and yellow perch. Some by-catch is expected but all nets are retrieved to ensure fish are not harmed, so most fish would be released safely. The area where activities would occur is not suitable for bull trout and they have not been captured in the past. No other ESA-listed fishes are present in project area.		
Activities would not result in any effects to water quality or floodplains.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explanation: The project would not take place within or around wetlands and therefore, there is no potential to affect wetlands		

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance associated with this project and therefore, there is no potential to affect groundwater and aquifers

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Explanation: There would be no changes to land use and no impacts to specially-designated areas and therefore, there is no potential to affect land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Explanation: There would be no changes to visual quality associated with this project and therefore, there is no potential to impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Explanation: A negligible amount of emissions would be generated by boats and other vehicles used for transportation.

11. Noise

Explanation: The project activities do not involve any new construction or new use of heavy equipment. A negligible amount of noise would be generated by boats and other vehicles used for transportation.

12. Human Health and Safety

Explanation: All proposed actions involve working in and around water, which poses some risk to human health and safety. But all actions are standard and customary RM&E activities that follow specific guidance to ensure quality data and safe working conditions that would mitigate for that risk.

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Project activities would occur on open water and no special permissions are required. If private lands are to be accessed, work would occur only after obtaining landowner approval.

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

Signed: /s/ Ted Gresh
Ted Gresh ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: May 13, 2020