

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Oregon Fish Screen Projects, Headgates

Project No.: 1993-066-00

Project Manager: Eric Leitzinger

Location: Multiple Locations, Oregon

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: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to construct, fabricate, and install fish screens as per the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) fish screen criteria. The projects would occur on private and public lands within the Deschutes, John Day, Umatilla, and Walla Walla subbasins. The ODFW Fish Biologists and Fish Screen and Passage Program Manager establish the schedule and priorities for placement of screening devices within the basins based on priorities set forth in the subbasin plans, Mid-Columbia River Conservation and Recovery Plan, Native Fish Conservation Policy, and the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Other considerations when establishing priorities are: absence or presence of fish, which fish species are present and their population status, if the fish screen would be new or a replacement, whether the existing fish screen meets current NOAA criteria, and the frequency of use during the irrigation season and migration, based on past history. After priority projects are selected either a pump screen or gravity screen would be installed.

New headgates would be constructed, fabricated, and installed to ODFW and Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) standards. The projects would occur on private and public lands within the Deschutes, John Day, Umatilla, and Walla Walla subbasins. Headgates would be installed based off of a priority list established via the subbasin plans, Mid-Columbia River Conservation and Recovery Plan, Native Fish Conservation Policy, and the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Headgates would be constructed within the existing concrete fish screen boxes, outside of the irrigation season, while the diversion ditch is typically not operational (dewatered) during construction.

Headgate installation:

Little Pine Creek #1	44.37647	-118.91172
Lightning Creek	44.724802	-118.50079
Belshaw Creek #4	44.437730	-119.289170
Long Creek #1	44.717346	-119.061914

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

The headgates would be installed within pre-existing diversion ditches on private property. Land use adjacent to these ditches is agricultural for hay production and cattle grazing. The environment is made up of native grasses and shrubs along the riparian areas. The land has minimal change in elevation.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA determined that the implementation of the proposed headgates would result in no potential to effect historic properties since all headgates would be contained to pre-existing diversions that are under 50 years in age.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Installation of headgates on existing structures. No new ground disturbance would be occurring.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Installation of headgates on existing structures using existing access points to diversion. No soil disturbance or disturbance of vegetation occurring, including ESA-listed plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status wildlife species or habitat would be impacted by the installation of headgates. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed by construction noise during implementation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The projects are covered under the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion (BiOp) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (HIP #2020038 & 2020099). Listed species include Middle Columbia River steelhead and bull trout and their critical habitat.

Project work would occur within the irrigation ditches typically outside of the irrigation season, and/or the ditch is typically dewatered during construction.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands would be disturbed by fish screen or headgate activities.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed; spill prevention measures would be present on site to reduce the risk of groundwater contamination.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change to existing land use would occur. Projects would occur on private property.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: New fish screens and headgates would be similar to existing structures and would not be noticeably different than existing structures. ODFW would use already existing access roads to keep a tight footprint and minimize visual impacts.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary, small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions would be generated during implementation.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would be generated during local approved daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions and no adjacent CERCLA sites.

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: The project sponsor, ODFW, would complete the project on private lands with the cooperation of the land owner.

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

Signed: /s/ Catherine Clark October 7, 2020
Catherine Clark – ECF-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Recruiting and Staffing, Inc.