

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Bull Trout Monitoring in Warm Springs Reservation

Project No.: 2007-157-00

Project Manager: Corrie Veenstra

Location: Jefferson and Wasco counties, Oregon

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 Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO) to monitor bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) populations within the Deschutes River Subbasin. The following actions would be conducted annually:

- Up to 210 juvenile bull trout trapped and tagged at Warm Springs River and Shitike Creek, typically via small dip nets during snorkel surveys, but may also include rotary screw traps, weirs or trap nets if needed.
- Snorkel and habitat surveys, and ongoing data collection in Warm Springs River and Shitike Creek.
- Streamside redd counts in Warm Springs River and Shitike Creek, Whitewater River, and Jefferson Creek.

All O&M would be shared between this project and two other CTWSRO projects (2011-014-00 and 2008-311-00).

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System and Bonneville's commitments to CTWSRO under the 2020 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the 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.).

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/ Sarah T. Biegel February 5, 2021

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.

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Project Site Description

All activities would occur at sites with existing access and associated structures (traps, PIT arrays, etc.) and located on property owned by the CTWSRO in the Deschutes River subbasin in Jefferson and Wasco counties, Oregon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by, nor any historic structures near, this project, and the actions would occur at existing infrastructure. Therefore, actions proposed by this project have no potential to affect historic and cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, geology and soils would not be impacted by the proposed activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project and there are no anticipated impacts to any plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The actions would not impact wildlife within the project area and there would be no effect.

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

Potential for Significance: No, with conditions

Explanation: Fish research on hatchery-origin and wild-origin anadromous salmonids is a common and wide-spread activity within the Columbia River Basin, and these project activities would involve the direct take of bull trout and no effect to other listed fishes as they are not present during

project activities. The ESA coverage for handling bull trout would be secured from the USFWS through a Section 10 Permit (TE71541A).

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the activities would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts expected as personnel are working at sites. The activities would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts expected as personnel travel to work sites. The activities would not significantly impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise levels may be slightly increased over background levels, but this would only occur temporarily during the normal working hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

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: NA

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: NA

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: NA

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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: This work would be implemented by tribal employees on properties owned by Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon.

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 February 5, 2021
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT