

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Monitoring and Exotic Fish Removal

**Project No.:** 1992-010-00

**Project Manager:** Jennifer Lord, EWM-4

**Location:** Bingham County, Idaho

**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 Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to monitor Yellowstone cutthroat trout (*Onchorhynchus clarkii bouvieri*) and remove exotic fish in Bingham County, Idaho. Salmonids that would benefit from this project include Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

Monitoring work (electroshocking and snorkel surveys) would occur in Spring, Clear, Diggie, and Jimmy Drinks creeks to assess habitat conditions and fish response to restoration work done at previous project sites in the Fort Hall Bottoms. Stream reaches would be sampled for benthic invertebrate and fish abundance and distribution, as well as for specific habitat parameters such as pre- and post-implementation stream width, habitat area, maximum water depth, mean water depth, mean wetted silt depth, flow, and substrate.

Field Crews would electroshock and remove invasive fish species such as common carp, yellow perch, and bass in the lowest 500 meter reach of Spring and Clear creeks to relieve predation on native salmonids (e.g., Yellowstone cutthroat trout) and other native fishes, such as suckers and mountain whitefish.

These actions would support BPA's commitments to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes 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



# 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:** Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Monitoring and Exotic Fish Removal

## **Project Site Description**

Activities would occur within Spring, Clear, Diggie, and Jimmy Drinks creeks located in the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' Fort Hall Bottoms. These tributaries feed into the Snake River at the Fort Hall Bottoms, approximately 6 miles northwest of Fort Hall, in Bingham County, Idaho. The Fort Hall Bottoms was historically used for grazing.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities; thus, the proposed actions would not have the potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities; thus, the proposed actions would not have the potential to affect geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal or State special-status plant species are within the project site. There would be no ground-disturbing or vegetation removal activities, so the proposed actions would not have the potential to affect plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal or State special-status wildlife species are within the project site. Minor, temporary impacts to local wildlife from human presence and noise during activities are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No action proposed would physically alter any aquatic habitat site; there would be no adverse physical changes to water bodies or floodplains from these actions. The project would handle fish and remove invasive fish in accordance with state guidelines. Yellowstone cutthroat trout are a special-status species within Idaho and are considered 'Imperiled'. There are no Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish or other special-status species and their habitats known to exist within or near the project site.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground-disturbing activities; thus, the proposed actions would not have the potential to affect wetlands.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions have no potential to impact groundwater.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would not impact or change land use.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would not impact visual quality of the project areas.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed actions would not impact air quality.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise levels would temporarily increase in the local area during normal working hours as the work occurs.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety regulations would be followed during work activities.

### **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 project is part of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' restoration program; all activities are approved as described.

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 January 6, 2021  
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient/CRGT