

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project 2021 North Fork Teanaway Floodplain Restoration Project

**Project No.:** 1997-015-00

**Project Manager:** Michelle O'Malley, EWU-4

**Location:** Kittitas County, Washington

**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 provide cost-share funding for implementation of the Yakama/Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP) 2021 North Fork Teanaway Floodplain Restoration Project (Project) located in the Yakima River Basin. BPA funds would contribute about 25 percent of overall project costs. Additional cost-share funding from the Salmon Recovery Board, and Yakima Integrated Plan would cover the remaining project costs.

In 2019 and 2020, YKFP completed helicopter wood placement and installed large wood trapping structures between RM 4.6 and 8.7. The 2021 Project would complement prior wood placement work by focusing on selective berm removal, in-stream gravel augmentation, installation of flow splitter and deflector structures and an engineered logjam, and unanchored wood placement between RM 5.5 and 5.9. The work would encourage gravel storage and sorting, improve floodplain habitat connectivity and complexity, and improve riparian habitats for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead and bull trout, as well as spring Chinook, coho, cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, and other native fish and amphibian species.

An existing push up berm comprised of native gravels and sediment currently confine the channel, limiting access to remnant secondary channels, and accumulating remnant gravel and cobble deposits, which limit downstream gravel recruitment and fish habitat potential. Selective berm removal would require the use of an excavator to remove about 2,100 cubic yards of gravel and sediment. About 1,500 yards would be used for streamside gravel augmentation. Gravels would be strategically placed to access frequent flood flows and encourage downstream sediment sorting and gravel bar accumulation over time. Any fine sediments not suitable for gravel augmentation would be placed outside the 10 year flood area. The remaining 600 yards of berm material would be used as ballast for engineered log structures. Berm removal and gravel augmentation would restore natural gravel recruitment downstream, restore floodplain connectivity, and re-establish stream sinuosity throughout the project reach.

Six flow splitter deflector structures would be installed to further encourage a return to more natural stream processes by re-directing flows from areas where the river exerts high erosive forces to a direction that enhances secondary channel formation and wood racking. Flow

deflectors would consist of key logs placed along excavated streambanks and anchored with base logs, racking logs, large boulders, slash, and sediment. Any work that requires in-stream or streamside excavation below the ordinary high water mark would require work area isolation measures to redirect flows during construction and limit potential impacts to fish and water quality.

About 100 pieces of loose wood with intact root wads would be placed in-stream to encourage further roughness, gravel accumulation, and multi-threaded channel formation. Any mobilized wood is likely to be trapped by downstream wood trapping structures constructed in 2020.

A staging area near RM 5.9 would be established for equipment storage and refueling. Equipment fueling area would be positioned at least 150 feet from the stream banks. Site access would be from county-owned North Fork Teanaway Road. Temporary access routes would be established throughout the project area, and would be removed, scarified, and re-seeded after construction. Temporary stream crossings would be via a channel spanning steel plate near the staging area. In areas where the excavator may enter the wetted perimeter of the bank, a platform of logs would be used to limit disturbance to native bed materials. All ground disturbing activities near waterways would occur within the designated in-water work window from July 15th to September 30th. An excavator would be operated from the bank as much as possible. If flows are higher than expected, work area isolation and fish exclusion measures would be employed to minimize impacts to migrating fish.

After construction, soils would be scarified and topped with slash to minimize erosion potential. Native seed and live stake plantings would be applied on disturbed floodplain surfaces. Inspection and maintenance of the project site would occur annually, and could result in minor on-site adjustments to wood placements, the addition of woody materials as needed to maintain project success, and additional vegetation plantings and management.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System and Bonneville's commitments to the Yakama Nation 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/ Claire McClory

Claire McClory

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange                      July 1, 2021

Katey C. Grange

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.

**Proposed Action:** 2021 North Fork Teanaway Floodplain Restoration Project

## **Project Site Description**

The Project is located within the North Cascades, Chiwaukum Hills and Lowland ecoregion. The Project would occur in the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF), a 50,000-acre piece of public land owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and co-managed with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The TCF Recreation Plan identifies the project area as a Road and River Corridor, which is used for scenic driving and river restoration that coincides with river access for fishing, swimming, and day use.

The project area is within a section of the North Fork Teanaway that has been historically degraded by and hydrologically altered by logging activities. Over time, the lack of old growth wood inputs, as well as splash dams constructed to move logs downstream have contributed toward substantial alterations to hydrologic processes, including reduced floodplain function and roughness, a weakened riparian corridor, and scour of naturally accumulated fine sediments and cobbles down to the native bedrock. Vegetation is dominated by Douglas fir and ponderosa pine, in addition to some Engelmann spruce, western white pine, western red cedar and grand fir. Riparian and riverine wetland areas within the Teanaway watershed are vegetated by cottonwood forest, scrub shrub thickets, and obligate and facultative wetland species.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA determined that the implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected (WA 2020 026). The Colville Confederated Tribes concurred with BPA's determination on April 16, 2020 and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred on April 20, 2020. No other responses were received from consulting parties.

Notes:

- Thirty-meter avoidance buffers would be flagged or marked off with t-posts and high visibility construction fencing around the perimeter of known cultural resources sites prior to project implementation.
- An archaeological monitor would work with field crews to ensure that known sites are avoided during implementation.
- In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribe's cultural staff and cultural committee and DAHP notified.

## 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to soil from increased erosion potential during berm removal, log jam construction, and grading activities. Sediment control BMPs would be installed prior to project implementation to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or excessive runoff during construction. Post construction seeding and mulching would minimize long-term erosion potential. Some fine sediments and gravels are likely to mobilize downstream during 2-year flood events. However, the project was designed to mobilize sediment to accumulate gravel bars and fill with cobble in areas that have scoured to bedrock.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed, plant species are known to be present. Temporary impacts to existing vegetation during grading activities. Post construction seeding and monitoring would re-establish native upland and riparian plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts to local wildlife habitat from construction noise and vegetation removal expected. ESA-listed species include historic Northern spotted owl (NSO) management circles (a state-designated listing) within the project area that are monitored annually by WDFW staff, with no recent detections. The project is covered under the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with Project Notification Form number 2021096.

Notes:

- Loud equipment use from chainsaws would occur outside of the NSO critical nesting period of March 1st to July 15th. No helicopter use proposed for this undertaking.
- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including construction timing and equipment use restrictions in potential NSO habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project has the potential to provide floodplain reconnection to areas that have been historically altered by human influence. No known state-listed special-status species present. ESA-listed fish species include middle Columbia River steelhead and bull trout. The project is covered under the HIP Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with Project Notification Form number 2021096. The project would result in net benefits to fish species within the project reach from increased habitat availability, floodplain access, and decreased summer stream temperatures.

Notes:

- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including work area isolation, turbidity monitoring requirements, and in-water work timing.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: About 0.72 acres of riverine wetland habitat would be temporarily impacted during construction activities. Equipment access and construction activities would take place during the dry season, and avoidance and minimization measures will be identified in the project Sponsor's Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit 27 (application number NWP-2021-330) and would further reduce impacts. Long-term benefits to wetlands and wetland cell development are expected to result from project implementation

Notes:

- The Project Sponsor would adhere to all wetland avoidance and minimization efforts identified in the Clean Water Act permit issued for this project.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor impacts to groundwater during construction excavation within the floodplain. Long-term increase in floodplain access would benefit groundwater recharge and function

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impact to recreation users due to access limitations during construction in the immediate project area. The project would align with the WDNR TCF Road and River Corridor recreation designation by enhancing river process and function while maintaining long-term access to fishing and dispersed recreation within the TCF.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor change to visual quality from berm removal and the addition of in-stream wood structures. The project area is not within a visually sensitive area.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in vehicle emissions and dust during construction. No long-term impacts to air quality.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in noise during daytime construction activities due to vehicles and equipment use. No long-term impacts to air quality.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact expected.

### **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 Yakama Nation has been working with WDNR to obtain a land use license for conducting the proposed work on WDNR property.

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

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory July 1, 2021  
Claire McClory, ECF-4 Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist