

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Tribal Pacific Lamprey Restoration Plan (*Update to previous CX issued on July 8, 2020*)

Project No.: 2008-524-00

Project Manager: Siena M. Lopez-Johnston, EWM-4

Location: Multiple Counties in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish and wildlife

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to continue funding the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) to implement the objectives and actions outlined in the Tribal Pacific Lamprey Restoration Plan (TPLRP), which seeks to inform regional management and understanding for the recovery of the species. Funding supports ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the main stem 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.). This CX is an update to the CX dated July 8, 2020 to reflect the holding of adult lamprey at the Bonneville Hatchery Captive Broodstock Building (CBB) until the lamprey are allocated to CRITFC member tribes.

In general, CRITFC would leverage resources and share research and technical expertise in collaboration with the Hagerman Genetics Lab at the University of Idaho and CRITFC member tribes – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Nez Perce Tribe (NPT), Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS). Primary components of the proposed action include:

Genetic monitoring of Pacific lamprey: CRITFC would provide supplies (e.g. Whatman paper, coin envelopes, and scissors) and organize, process, and analyze tissue samples and environmental DNA (eDNA) water samples at the Hagerman Genetics Lab. The Tribes and other collaborators would be collecting tissue and water samples and directly catching, handling, and releasing the lamprey.

Larval lamprey surveys: NPT would be subcontracted to conduct larval Pacific lamprey surveys in spawning tributaries that are also sites for adult reintroductions. Using backpack electrofishing techniques, NPT would survey 1 square meter sections within each river reach stratum to allow comparison of relative abundance within and between habitats. NPT would also collect tissue samples and record river temperature, flow, conductivity, substrate size, and wetted channel width.

Adult Pacific lamprey collection and transfer: CRITFC would collect migrating adult Pacific lamprey at the Columbia River main stem dams (Bonneville, The Dalles, and John Day Dams) and transfer them to member tribes, who would use the lamprey for translocation as well as for research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts. During the collection season (approximately May through September), lamprey would be held in holding tanks at the Bonneville Hatchery Captive Broodstock Building (CBB) until they are allocated to CRITFC member tribes. CRITFC could maintain, replace, and modify holding equipment, including holding tanks, alarms and monitoring equipment, pumps, plumbing and stand pipes, filtration, screens, and fish tagging and other work stations. All work would occur indoors at the Bonneville Hatchery CBB, and no major interior or exterior building modifications would be required. CRITFC would monitor the holding tanks at Bonneville Hatchery CBB, and disease prevention and disinfection protocols would be followed. Lamprey would be transported following the Tribal Guidelines for Translocation.

The proposed project would not require any ground disturbance or vegetation removal or management. Collection activities at the main stem dams would not require any change in dam operations.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad J. Hamel

Chad J. Hamel

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange July 9, 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.

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Project Site Description

All activities would occur at existing facilities and field sites throughout the Columbia River Basin.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: As no ground disturbance, tree or vegetation removal or management, or modifications to existing structures would occur as a result of the proposed project, BPA has determined that this undertaking would have No Potential to Affect historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur as a result of the proposed project. Therefore, there would be no impact to geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not require any tree or vegetation removal or management and would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species habitats. Therefore, there would be no effect on state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during Pacific lamprey collection and translocation. However, wildlife species that may be present in the area around the main stem dams would likely be habituated to human activity. The proposed project would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species habitats. Therefore, there would be no effect on state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Pacific lamprey traps at the main stem dams are located in the fishways behind the picketed leads and at the Bonneville Dam Adult Fish Facility lamprey ramp, where special-status fish species do not have access. The remaining proposed actions support efforts by the Tribes or other regional partners, who have secured their own ESA permits:

- ESA Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit (File Number; 1134 - 7R) - Assess the status of Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Snake, Salmon, Clearwater, Imnaha, and Grande Ronde river basins
- ESA Section 7(a)(2) biological opinion (Consultation Number: WCR-2017-7615) - Final Mid-Columbia Chinook salmon and steelhead hatchery programs

CRITFC's proposed actions would either result in no effect on protected fish species, ESUs, and habitats or would be covered under the above permits and consultations secured by the Tribes or other regional partners.

There would be no impact to water bodies or floodplains.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not require any ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not require any ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary emissions could increase in the local area from vehicle and equipment use during Pacific lamprey collection and translocation. There would be no permanent change in air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary noise could increase in the local area from vehicle and equipment use during Pacific lamprey collection and translocation. There would be no permanent change in ambient noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Individuals carrying out proposed project activities would be trained in proper techniques and safe use of materials and equipment. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project 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: 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: No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required as all proposed work would occur at existing facilities and field work would be accessed via existing roads and adjacent public lands.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette July 9, 2021
W. Walker Stinnette Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT