

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Hamilton Springs Blackberry Removal

Project Manager: Brady Allen, EWP-4

Location: Skamania County, WA

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: BPA proposes to remove invasive Himalayan blackberry from the area surrounding artificial chum spawning channels at Hamilton Springs near North Bonneville, WA.

Chainsaws would be used to cut blackberry back 10 feet or more from the channels. Debris would be moved to uphill location and would be cut up into small pieces with chainsaws.

Herbicides would be sprayed on the remaining blackberry. BPA would minimize risk of drift by following label instructions and herbicide would be mix off site and application would be by backpack sprayers.

This would be a one-time action and would occur in September 2022. The spawning channels are dry during this time and the closest waterway is Hamilton Creek, which is over 600 feet away from where the work would occur. .

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with NMFS on the O&M of the Columbia River System. 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.)

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/ Ted Gresh

Ted Gresh

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

August 25, 2022

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: Hamilton Springs Blackberry Removal

Project Site Description

Hamilton Springs is within the town of North Bonneville, WA. The chum spawning channels were constructed in the early-2000's and are now surrounded by Himalayan blackberry. The spawning channels are dry in the summer and fall and the nearest waterbody containing water during the summer and fall is Hamilton Creek, which is more than 600 feet from the project area. Some mature black cottonwood is also in the vicinity.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA archaeologist reviewed the proposed actions and determined that there would be no potential to effect historic and cultural resources

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The site would be accessed on foot and no ground disturbance would occur.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Only non-native/invasive Himalayan blackberry would be removed from the site

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Non-native/invasive Himalayan blackberry offers little if any habitat value for any wildlife that may be in the area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The spawning channels would be dry during blackberry removal. The closest waterway would be more than 600 feet from the treatment area; herbicide would not runoff or enter the standing water.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands in the area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur above ground.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Vegetation removal would not alter land use in the area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are solely for routine maintenance and monitoring and would not result in any changes to the existing visual quality of project sites.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Emissions from vehicles and power tools would be extremely minor, temporary, and cause no lasting changes to air quality

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Vehicles and equipment would create an increase in ambient noise. However, these effects would be minor and temporary

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best practices to ensure human health and safety. Machinery would be operated solely by trained and licensed personnel.

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: BPA vegetation management has coordinated with the land owner (City of North Bonneville) and received written permission for undertaking the vegetation removal at Hamilton Springs.

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

Signed: /s/ Ted Gresh

Ted Gresh
Environmental Protection Specialist

August 25, 2022

Date