

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Oregon Fish Screens Projects, Operation and Maintenance (*Update to Categorical Exclusion published on February 7, 2020*)

Project No.: 1993-066-00

Project Manager: Joshua Ashline – EWL-4

Location: Multiple Locations, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B 1.3 Routine Maintenance; B 1.20 Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund operation and maintenance activities within Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) fish screen program to reduce or eliminate fish loss associated with water withdrawals and passage barriers. Operation and maintenance of these existing facilities would improve survival of anadromous and resident fish species in the Hood River, Deschutes, Grande Ronde, Imnaha, John Day, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Willamette, and other Columbia River subbasins.

Actions to maintain proper functioning of the fish screens would include:

- Removing accumulated debris from bypass outfalls, screens, bypass pipes, and trash racks manually or with heavy equipment.
- Inspecting, maintaining and replacing fish screen components, including screen material, cleaning arms, seals, bypass pipes, gear boxes, u-joints, bearings, batteries, paddlewheels.
- Adjusting headgates, weir boards and/or bypass orifices.
- Managing vegetation, manually or with terrestrial herbicide treatments.
- Conducting fish salvage due to entrainment after a high water event.
- Installing or replacing walkway and/or safety handrails.

In some cases full parts replacement would be needed depending on the extent of the damage to the screen. ODFW employees would utilize existing access ways to the fish screens. Sediment and debris would typically be flushed through the bypass outfalls, however when heavy equipment is utilized for sediment and debris removal all of it would be disposed of on-site in an upland area. No excavation of stream or stream bank materials would occur and no work would occur within the stream channel.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp). These proposed activities also fulfill commitments specified in the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp).

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/ Catherine Clark

Catherine Clark

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

September 26, 2022

Date

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

The project sites are located throughout John Day, Deschutes, Grande Ronde, Umatilla, Hood, Willamette, and other Columbia Basin waterways.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed O&M activities would be occurring on fish screens (younger than 50 years) and there would be no ground disturbance to maintain the screens, BPA determined that there was no potential to effect historic or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Continued maintenance on existing structures. No new ground disturbance.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Continued maintenance of existing structures using existing access points. Overgrown vegetation would be cut back or treated to keep the vegetation out of the diversions. No known populations of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plants in any of the project areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary displacement of wildlife due to noise and human presence from maintenance activities could occur. No long-term effect on wildlife or their habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Actions would have no effect or be classified as low risk to species according to the current biological opinions issued by the FWS and NMFS on the effects of Bonneville's

Habitat Improvement Program (HIP). ESA-listed fish species present in the project areas include Middle-Columbia Chinook, Middle-Columbia steelhead, cutthroat trout, bull trout; and state sensitive species in the project areas include interior redband trout, lamprey, smallmouth bass, and mountain whitefish. A project notification form (PNF) for those activities falling under the HIP consultation would be submitted annually.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands present, therefore no impacts to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact to groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change to land use proposed.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary changes to visual quality could occur in the immediate project areas due to fish screen maintenance and equipment occurring in the project area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with increased vehicular traffic would occur during project activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary intermittent noise would be generated during implementation.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known hazardous materials in the project areas.

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: Operation and maintenance of existing irrigation fish screen structures would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. ODFW would work with land owners to maintain irrigation fish screens on private land.

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

Signed: /s/ Catherine Clark

Catherine Clark, ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

September 26, 2022

Date