

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: L-8a Settling Basin Construction

Project No.: 2010-072-00

Project Manager: Eric Leitzinger – EWM-4

Location: Lemhi, 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: The Bohannon 03 irrigation diversion was removed in 2017 and the flood irrigation system it supplied was replaced with a pump and sprinkler system off of irrigation ditch L-8a to preserve flows in Bohannon Creek and the Lemhi River. The new system's function has been hampered by sediment-caused pump damage and requires a method of removing sediment before it reaches the pump. A 3-foot by 6-foot concrete settling basin would be constructed along the pump's water supply pipeline from the L-8a irrigation ditch. It would be located near that pump within the 2017 construction site.

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

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: Bohannon 03 Diversion Reconstruction

Project Site Description

The project site is located in uplands within a one-acre former construction site used to install a large irrigation pump. It is adjacent to the Old Lemhi Road. The ground has been cleared of vegetation and leveled. The area is surrounded by agricultural fields and agricultural outbuildings. A home site is nearby.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A cultural resource survey of a larger project area, which includes this specific site, was conducted in 2017. A National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation on that project was completed with the Nez Perce Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) (BPA# ID 2017-005/ SHPO# 2016-1166). Though a number of cultural resources were recorded in the survey of that larger project area (two ditches, one road, one structure, and some dredge tailings), none were determined to be affected by project activities, including those within the one-acre pump construction site, which is the location of this current proposal. The proposed settling basin would be located adjacent to the Old Lemhi Road, but would not affect it. This road was determined by BPA in the 2017 consultation to be not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and SHPO concurred. No response was received from either of the tribes consulted.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soils would be displaced, compacted, and mixed by the actions of construction equipment, but these impacts would occur on a site that has been previously disturbed by construction equipment when the pump and its supply and delivery lines were installed. There would be no previously-unaltered soils impacted. The site would be less than 1/20 acre in size, and impacts from construction actions would be minimized by the application of best management practices for erosion control.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The diversion construction would be in a former construction site, which has been cleared of all vegetation. No native vegetation would be disturbed. No ESA-listed or

“special-status” plant species are present in this location. Disturbed soils would be seeded with grasses and forbs for vegetative restoration once the construction is complete.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction would begin and complete in the fall; thus, no disturbance of nesting birds would occur. There is no vegetation on the site, so no native species’ habitat would be disturbed. Larger wildlife in nearby habitats may be disturbed and temporarily displaced by noise and human presence during the construction actions. These larger species would likely not be displaced from their home ranges, though they may temporarily relocate as long as active construction is occurring.

No ESA-listed or “special-status” wildlife species are present in this location.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The action would occur on an upland construction site. No stream or stream bank habitats would be disturbed. The water supply to the pump would be from an irrigation ditch at a location downstream of a functioning fish screen so no fish would reach the supply lines, proposed settling basin, or pump. There would be no effect on aquatic species or their habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present at the project site. There would be no effect.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The concrete settling basin would have no potential to supply or withdraw water from groundwater or aquifers. The operation of construction equipment may have a short-term potential for minor impact to water quality from possible fuel or other fluid drips or spills, but best management practices for construction and equipment operations would be applied and would prevent or minimize this potential.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change to the agricultural land uses in the project area. This structure would be constructed on private agricultural lands, and would be intended for continued use of the pump and sprinkler irrigation system now in place to support agriculture while protecting flows in Bohannon Creek and the Lemhi River for ESA-listed fish.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: This new concrete settling basin would be visually consistent with other structures already on site and with the agricultural setting within which it would be located. There would be no evident long-term change to visual quality in the area. There would be short-term scenery impacts from the presence of construction equipment during construction.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Driving of trucks and operation of construction equipment would produce emissions, but the amount would be minimal and short-term, and consistent with that routinely produced by local agricultural activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise would be generated from trucks and the operation of construction equipment. The type and level of noise would be consistent with that produced by local agricultural activities and would be short-term. These impacts would occur during daylight hours during the fall months.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No long-term public safety hazards would be created with this project. Routine, short-term, safety hazards would be expected from the incremental addition of truck traffic on local roads, and the operation of construction equipment.

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: Land owners and water users associated with this irrigation diversion have already been informed by Idaho Department of Fish and Game of this replacement. Construction would proceed following notification of, and in cooperation with, the affected land owner and irrigation water users.

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

Signed: /s/ Robert W. Shull

Robert W. Shull

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
CorSource Technology Group

October 26, 2022

Date