

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Cle Elum Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tag Array Installation

**Project No.:** 2010-030-00

**Project Manager:** Russell Scranton, EWP-4

**Location:** Yakima County, 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 fund Yakama Confederated Tribes to install a permanent PIT tag detection array in the Lower Cle Elum River, upstream of the confluence with the Yakima River. The instream PIT tag detection system (IPTDS) would consist of two separate channel spanning rows of antennas, each approximately 120 feet (ft) across. Each row would have five antennas, for a total of ten antennas. The rows would be spaced a minimum of 20 ft and a maximum of 60 ft apart. The antennas would be laid horizontally on the river bottom, flush with the top of the stream substrate; the dimensions of the antennas would be 25 ft by 3 ft and 3 inches in diameter. The antennas would be anchored to the stream bed with M4 (“manta ray”) anchors attached to 5/8-inch threaded stainless steel rods, driven to a maximum depth of 28 inches using a pneumatic jackhammer. The array would be powered by solar panels. Power and sensitive equipment would be stored in a job box which, along with the solar panels, would occupy a 10 ft by 10 ft area approximately 50 ft to the west of the array and 6 ft above the ordinary high water mark. The solar panels and job box would be elevated an additional 3 ft on a stand to keep them above the typical winter snow levels.

Installation would occur during low flow (less than 500 cfs) periods either beginning between the months of March and May or from October to December. There would be no excavation for installation beyond manual movement of stream cobble, slightly upstream or downstream adjacent to the antennas. Power cables running from the array to the power supply would be placed on the ground surface.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System, and BPA’s ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife on 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.

Catherine Clark  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
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:** Cle Elum Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tag Array Installation

## **Project Site Description**

The project site would be located approximately 2.3 miles southwest of Cle Elum near the mouth of the Cle Elum River, in Yakima County, Washington. The project site would be within the channel and on the adjacent bank of the river with the vegetation consisting of sparse grass, cottonwood, and pine. The project would take place on state park lands between Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail, adjacent to Washington State Department of Natural Resources-managed lands.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action has been evaluated by a BPA archeologist and was determined to have no potential to cause effect to cultural resources or historic properties.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The IPDIS would be anchored to the riverbed substrate. Installation of the anchors would cause minor, short term disturbance resulting from displaced substrate and would not have a significant impact on geology and soils. The job box for the PIT tag array would sit atop the ground, resulting in no soil disturbance.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed or special-status plant species are present within the project site. Streamside equipment may require minor disturbance to nearby plants that hinder installation, but no broad-scale vegetation removal is proposed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed or special-status species or habitat are known to exist on the project site; therefore, there would be no impact from the installation of the PIT tag array and its associated parts. Wildlife may be temporarily displaced by construction noise during implementation but would return to the project area once there is no more human presence.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: ESA-listed bull trout (*Salvelinus curfluentus*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) as well as their critical habitat are present in the Cle Elum River. Minor, short term disturbance to fish may occur during IPDIS installation. Project-related impacts to ESA-listed species are addressed in BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) biological opinions with NMFS and USFWS. No action proposed would physically alter any aquatic habitat on site. There would be no adverse physical changes to water bodies, floodplains, or fish resulting from the proposed action.

Notes:

- Yakama Confederated Tribes would adhere to the Terms and Conditions and Conservation Measures in BPA's HIP consultation documents during the IPDIS installation.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Based on the USFWS's National Wetlands Inventory, the project area overlaps freshwater forested/shrub wetland; however, the proposed action areas and footprint are quite small, and no excavation is proposed within the wetland. Therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground-disturbing activities would be minimal and occur only within the streambed and are not likely to intersect groundwater and would have no impact on aquifers. BMPs would be implemented to prevent contamination of groundwater from equipment leaks and spills.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is not located in a specially-designated area and installation would last a day and would not hinder the use of the area by users. In the long term, PIT tag array installation would not hinder land use and no change to land use would occur.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No visually prominent vegetation, landform, or structural changes would be made. The IPDIS would be placed on the river's bed, below the surface of the water. The job box would be placed on the bank of the river but would be small and not visually obtrusive.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, short term impact to air quality from vehicle emissions during installation would occur. However, all impact would be temporary and limited to installation.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, short term increase in ambient noise would occur from installation. However, all impact would be temporary and limited to installation.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety regulations would be followed during work 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: Activities would be implemented on state lands. YN would coordinate with the state park staff to obtain their permission to install all project components.

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

Signed:

Catherine Clark  
Environmental Protection Specialist