

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lemhi Fish Trap Shed Power Installation

Project No.: 1990-055-00

Project Manager: Russell Scranton, EWP-4

Location: Lemhi County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.15 Support buildings

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to install power poles to provide electric power to their Lemhi River fish trap storage shed located on property owned by IDFG. These actions 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.).

IDFG would contract a local electrician and engineer from Idaho Power to install a meter and power pole for the IDFG shed. The meter pole installed by the electrician would have an approximate height of 22 feet with a circumference of 18 inches and would be buried 4 to 5 feet deep with an auger. The meter pole would be permitted and inspected before Idaho Power would connect service to the pole. The power pole installed by Idaho Power would have an approximate height of 45 feet with a circumference of 40 inches and buried 6.5 feet deep. The pole would be installed with boom truck from State Highway 28 and the hole would be back filled and tamped around the pole with a mini excavator. The pole would also have one transformer, one overhead secondary line extension, and one overhead service installed from a bucket truck and ladder. The proposed location of the two poles would be on either side of State Highway 28, within 100 feet of one another, and tree limbs would be cut only where necessary. The project would occur on land that has been heavily modified from the construction of the adjacent storage shed and state highway. Access to the poles would be on existing roads and staging areas would be located along the state highway and near the fish trap storage shed. Implementation would occur in 2025.

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.¹

Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware of the November 12, 2024, decision in *Marin Audubon Society v. Federal Aviation Administration*, No. 23-1067 (D.C. Cir. Nov. 12, 2024). To the extent that a court may conclude that the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA are not judicially enforceable or binding on this agency action, BPA has nonetheless elected to follow those regulations at 40 Code Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §§ 1500– 1508, in addition to the US Department of Energy’s NEPA implementing procedures at 10 C.F.R. Part § 1021, to meet the agency’s obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*”

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: Lemhi Fish Trap Shed Power Installation

Project Site Description

The project area is located along the Lemhi River, approximately 27 miles south of Salmon, Idaho in Township 18 North, Range 24 East, Section 21, at an elevation of about 5,200 feet. The project area is within the Lemhi River Watershed of the Salmon River Basin. Much of the Lemhi River runs through private agricultural land and joins the Salmon River near Salmon, Idaho. The surrounding vegetation is mostly hay and sagebrush-steppe with scattered stands of willows and deciduous trees in the riparian zone. The climate is dry with cold winters and hot summers. Major land uses surrounding the project area are agriculture and rural residential. Infrastructure and water bodies in or near the project area include Idaho State Highway 28, IDFG's fish trap storage shed, IDFG's Lemhi River rotary screw trap, IDFG's Hayden Creek campground, Hayden Creek (a tributary to the Lemhi River), and the Lemhi River. Vegetation within the project area is open, managed low-growing grass and shrubs (mostly non-native or invasive species) on both sides of Highway 28 with additional scattered trees east of Highway 28 near the shed. Land use at the project work sites is Highway 28 right-of-way and IDFG fish trap storage grounds.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On October 22, 2024, a BPA archaeologist initiated the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation and made a determination of No Historic Properties Affected in a letter sent to the Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation, and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO concurred with BPA's area of potential effects, proposed actions, and determination on October 29, 2024. No other responses were received within the comment period ending November 21, 2024.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA requires that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties. BPA provided the sponsor with a copy of BPA's Post Review Discovery Protocol.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal soil disturbance would occur; erosion control measures would be used to prevent erosion or off-site sediment delivery into the Lemhi River.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status species are present. About 0.10 acres of grass and shrubs (mostly non-native or invasive species) removed or disturbed over two locations. Disturbed areas around power poles would remain unseeded for fire prevention.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary disturbance and displacement of wildlife in the immediate area of the power pole sites due to noise and human presence from installation activities. About 0.10 acres of habitat would be altered (removed or disturbed). There would be no long-term effect on wildlife or their habitat. Canada lynx and North American wolverine are possible to occur in the area. However, habitat conditions in the project area are less than desirable for either of these species and they would likely move on. There are no known dens or sightings of either species in or near the project area. There would be no effect on ESA-listed Canada lynx or North American wolverine, or Canada lynx designated critical habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Spring/summer Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout and their designated critical habitats are present in the Lemhi River. All work would be conducted in upland areas greater than 500 feet from the river. No in-water work would take place, and no removal of riparian vegetation would occur. Best Management Practices including silt fences and spill management would be implemented to prevent sediment and/or hazardous materials from reaching the river. There would be no effect on ESA-listed or sensitive fish species. The project site is not within a water body or the 100-year floodplain.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would be 6.5 feet; spill prevention measures would be implemented to limit the potential of spills causing ground water contamination.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use and no work in specially-designated areas. There would be temporary impacts to traffic for one or two days associated with installing the power pole on the west side of Highway 28 and stringing the electric line across Highway 28 to connect to the meter pole near the fish-trap shed. To reduce impacts and to

provide for safety, Idaho Power would contract with a traffic control firm to redirect traffic out of one lane to the other while Idaho Power conducts the work next to and across Highway 28.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new power poles would be visual consistent with the existing agricultural and rural setting.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions and dust associated with increased vehicular traffic would be expected during construction activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary intermittent noise would occur during construction activities which would be during daylight hours only. Noise type and level would be consistent with the surrounding agricultural and rural setting.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction workers would be trained in the proper use of equipment. Any activities involving hazardous materials would be disposed of at a designated hazardous waste facility.

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: Coordination has occurred with Idaho Transportation Department; specific provisions requested would be implemented to control traffic during installation of the power pole on the west side of Highway 28 and stringing the electric line across Highway 28.

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

Signed:

Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist