

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Yakama Nation's Data Collection for Frogs Home Aquatic Restoration Project

**Project No.:** 1997-051-00

**Project Manager:** Daniel Newberry, EWU - 4

**Location:** Yakima County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Yakama Nation Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP) to implement pre-project studies for the Frogs Home Aquatic Restoration Project. This project would take place on Yakama Nation fee owned land in Yakima County of Washington State.

The YKFP proposes implementing preliminary work for the Frogs Home Aquatic Restoration Project that would consist of hand-placed in-stream data loggers to collect pre-project data and inform future restoration actions. YKFP would install three hand-placed in-stream data loggers within Blue Slough, a side channel of the Yakima River and within Moxie Drain, an irrigation canal. Data loggers would be deployed in-stream by driving a metal t-post into the stream bed and attaching the data logger and zip ties or cabling. These areas would be accessed by foot and upon completion of data collection, all field equipment would be removed from the stream.

These actions would support the conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Operations and Maintenance of the Columbia River System. These actions also support BPA's commitments to the Yakama Nation in the Columbia River Fish Accord, as amended, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System 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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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.<sup>1</sup>

Catherine Clark  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

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<sup>1</sup> BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its 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:** Yakama Nation's Data Collection for Frogs Home Aquatic Restoration Project

## **Project Site Description**

The Frogs Home Aquatic Restoration Project would be located approximately 1.5 miles east of Union Gap and immediately north of the Rattlesnake Hills within the Yakima River Floodplain. The current project site is being utilized for duck hunting, wetland areas are covered in reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) and other non-native vegetation.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) on the proposed project on January 13, 2025 (WA 2025 027). Consulting parties included the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). On January 13, 2025, BPA determined that the proposed project would result in no historic properties affected. DAHP concurred with this determination on January 13, 2025. No other responses were received from consulting parties.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soil would be displaced by data logger installation. The depth of the soil disturbance would not exceed four feet and would be contained to where t-posts are installed. Therefore, the proposed actions would have minimal impact to soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed or state special status plant species in the project areas. Plants in the immediate vicinity of each project area would be subject to short term impacts as a result of trampling by foot or vehicles used to reach the project site. No excavation is proposed within the project site and vegetation is anticipated to rebound after implementation. Therefore, the proposed actions would have no effect on ESA-listed or state special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence at the project sites. However, the proposed actions would be temporary (no more than a few hours at each site) and would be largely consistent with human activity typical of the sites. Wildlife species that could be present in the area would

likely be accustomed to this level of activity. The proposed actions would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species habitat. Therefore, the proposed actions would have no effect on ESA-listed or state special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Yakima River contains ESA-listed bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and their critical habitat; however, all data loggers would be implemented during low flow periods and there would be no impact to ESA-list or state special status fish species. There would be a benefit to those species by providing environmental data at the site to better inform future restoration actions.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Data loggers would be placed within the stream channel at the Frogs Home Aquatic Restoration Project site which would be adjacent to existing wetlands, however, there are no proposed actions within those wetlands. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would be four 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: Land use would not change as a result of the proposed actions.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Visual quality would have minor changes associated while data loggers are installed but would return to pre-project conditions upon removal and would not change in the long term as a result of the proposed actions.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with the use of vehicles would occur. However, use would be equivalent to typical use in the area. Therefore, the proposed actions would have no effect on air quality.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary noise increases associated with vehicles would occur, however, would only occur during daylight hours during installation.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and safety.

### **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: Yakama Nation would work internally with appropriate land managers for access to all site locations.

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