

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Easton Acclimation Facility Water Intake Maintenance

**Project No.:** 2023-003-00; 56662 REL 297

**Project Manager:** Brian McIlraith, EWU-4

**Location:** Kittitas County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Yakama Nation to perform routine maintenance of the water intake structure at the Easton Acclimation Facility. The facility is part of Yakama Nation's Levi George (formerly named Cle Elum) integrated spring Chinook hatchery program and the Easton site serves to acclimate juvenile spring Chinook before they are released into the Yakima River Basin. Process water for the Easton Acclimation Facility is supplied by a surface water intake with two pumps that draw water from the Yakima River. The intake structure's concrete blockouts, where fish screens are seated, have deteriorated due to years of water exposure. These defects risk screen failure, sediment intrusion, and impairment of facility function.

Repairs to concrete blockouts at screen interfaces would include sawcutting repair areas, chipping out delaminated concrete, patching with sand-loaded epoxy mortar and grinding the repaired surfaces flush with the surface of the existing structure. A temporary cofferdam would be constructed around the intake area to isolate the work from river flow and allow dry work conditions for the repairs. All work would occur within the dewatered zone. The work would occur in October to align with annual low-flow conditions.

These actions would contribute to 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 1021.102 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; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures* (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and

- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.<sup>1</sup>

Carolyn A. Sharp  
Supervisory 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 the interim final rule to revise DOE NEPA regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 and NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

# **Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation**

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:** Easton Acclimation Facility Water Intake Maintenance

## **Project Site Description**

The Easton Acclimation Facility is located at River Mile 198 of the Yakima River, approximately 12.5 miles northwest of the City of Cle Elum on land owned by BPA. The acclimation site includes a river intake, six raceways, a cleaning waste basin, service building with office and storage, and generators for power. Fish are held at the acclimation site from January to mid-May. Habitat in this segment of the river is moderately impacted by past irrigation withdrawals and channelization. Flows in the Yakima River are highly managed through a system of dams and reservoirs for irrigation and water levels are consistently at their lowest at this point on the Yakima River in the fall months.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: As no ground disturbance would occur as a result of this project and facilities are not old enough to be historically-eligible (less than 50 years old), BPA has determined that the project has No Potential to Effect historic properties (BPA CR ID 2023 034).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur; there would be no impacts to soils and geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur and no plants would be disturbed. Activities would occur within existing developed areas that are not vegetated. No ESA-listed or state-sensitive plant species are present to be affected by the repair work.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect to wildlife as the proposed activity would not introduce noticeable human activity and noise compared to existing human activity and noise associated with existing facility operations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Yakima River supports a wide range of native fish including spring Chinook, coho and ESA-listed Mid-Columbia steelhead and bull trout. The work would be completed

consistent with existing ESA consultations related to on-going facility operation. During the fall months, Yakima River levels are at their lowest, fish passage is generally limited to mainstem migration and in water work is authorized by WDFW. Yakama Nation would conduct in-water work in accordance with their Hydraulic Permit Approval to isolate the work space with a cofferdam that would allow the concrete work to be conducted in the dry. Work site isolation measures would be maintained until work is complete and the concrete is fully cured. Fish would be excluded by slowly lowering water levels and netting if necessary. There may be short-term, localized turbidity upon cofferdam removal, though the low flow conditions would minimize the potential for downstream sedimentation and properly maintained intake screens will protect juvenile fish from entrainment and injury in the future.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur on existing developed facilities. There would be no ground disturbance and no impact to wetlands.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or groundwater use are proposed by these actions. As a result, there would be no impacts to groundwater and aquifers.

## **8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing land uses would remain the same. There would be no impact to specially-designated areas.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in the visual character of the facilities would occur and the work would involve repair of equipment in-kind.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There may be minor and temporary amounts of dust produced by concrete grinding. The emissions would be of short duration and consistent in amount and duration with other operation activities at the facility. There would be no long-term effects to air quality.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise is anticipated during construction activities. The noise would be of short duration and consistent in volume or duration with operational activities at the facility. This noise would be temporary and cause no long-term impacts.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and safety. Equipment may be removed or replaced that contains hazardous materials; these

materials would be disposed of off-site according to all local, state, and federal regulations. No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project 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: The acclimation site is located on land owned by BPA. Yakama Nation is the operator of the facility and coordinates with BPA regarding ongoing operations and maintenance of the facility.

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

Signed:

Carolyn A. Sharp  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist