

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Deferred Screen Maintenance at Multiple Locations along the Umatilla and Walla Walla Rivers

Project No.: 2023-003-01

Project Manager: Eric Leitzinger, EWM - 4

Location: Umatilla County, Oregon and Walla Walla County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat; B1.3 Routine maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) to address non-recurring maintenance needs to maintain fish screen facilities along the Umatilla and Walla Walla rivers. The proposed actions would support continued fish passage for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) at screen facilities associated with irrigation diversions; protect fish from entrapment in irrigation ditches and fields; and ensure proper functionality of fish screens for future years.

Work would include actions to maintain, repair, or replace equipment in-kind at existing fish screen facilities that receive funding from BPA for ongoing operations and maintenance. These facilities use equipment and controllers that are subject to routine maintenance each year but need to be replaced as parts wear out, become outdated, or are damaged during floods or other severe weather events. The proposed actions would target projects that have mission critical or essential functions and are due for repair or replacement in the immediate future. These maintenance actions would not involve ground disturbing activities, would occur at existing fish passage facilities to support ongoing operations and maintenance, and would not extend the intended useful life of the facilities. Details of the actions proposed for each facility are included in the table below.

| Fish Screen Facility | Operator | Landowner | Locale | Proposed Actions |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Three Mile Falls (left bank) | Westland Irrigation District (WID) | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) | Umatilla, OR | Repairing or replacing the crane cables and motor, replacing the Programmable Logic Control (PLC) system |
| Feed | WID | USBR | Echo, OR | Refurbishing the drum screens, replacing porosity boards, installing LED lights (only bulbs) around buildings and screen infrastructure, purchasing ten backup motors for powering the fish screens in case of an emergency or a failure in the screen power system |
| Maxwell | WID | USBR | Hermiston, OR | Refurbishing the drum screens, installing LED lights (only bulbs) around fish screens and other infrastructure |
| Stanfield | WID | private | Echo, OR | Replacing generators, replacing the PLC system to automate operations, replacing chain hoists/power rails, installing LED lights (only bulbs) for buildings and screen infrastructure, replacing ten backup motors for the fish screens |
| Westland | WID | private | Echo, OR | Replacing actuator gates at the headgates, replacing staff gauges, replacing the PLC system to automate operations |
| Gardena/Burlingame | Gardena Farms Irrigation District (GFID) | private | Walla Walla, WA | Refurbishing the drum screens, repairing the canal headgate |
| Little Walla Walla | Hudson Bay District Improvement Company | private | Milton-Freewater, OR | Replacing the generator/transfer switch, refurbishing the screen cleaner system, replacing the canal actuator gate structure |
| Garden City Lowden II | GFID | private | Walla Walla, WA | Repairing or replacing the fish screen cleaning system |

Funding the proposed activities supports conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp) and the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp). These actions also support 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 1021.102 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.¹

Jacquelyn Schei
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ 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 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: Deferred Screen Maintenance at Multiple Locations along the Umatilla and Walla Walla Rivers

Project Site Description

Project sites include existing developed fish screen facilities at irrigation diversions and their grounds, including the irrigation canals, headgates, fish screens, fish bypass, and associated equipment to operate and maintain the components. Three Mile Falls, Feed, Maxwell, Stanfield, and Westland fish screen facilities are in Umatilla County, Oregon. Gardena/Burlingame, Little Walla Walla, and Garden City Lowden II fish screen facilities are in Walla Walla County, Washington.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions do not include any ground disturbing activities that would affect subsurface resources. Furthermore, the proposed modifications would occur on modern structures (less than 50 years of age). BPA has determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present (BPA CR No. OR 2025 125).

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur; there would be no impact to geology or soils.

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 special-status plant species would be present within the project sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in existing, developed facilities. No ESA-listed or state special-status wildlife species would be present within the project sites. There would be no effect to wildlife as the proposed activities would not introduce noticeable human activity and noise beyond existing human activity and noise from usual facility operations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Maintenance activities would occur when the fish screen facilities have been shut down for the season. These activities would take place in areas that do not require in-water work or that are isolated from the river because the canal has been closed and dewatered after irrigation season. There would be no impact on water bodies, floodplains, or fish and proposed activities would benefit ESA-listed and other fish species in the long term by facilitating passage past irrigation diversions.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur within existing developed facilities. There would be no impact to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or groundwater use are proposed by these actions. There would be no impacts to groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing land uses for irrigation diversions and fish screening and bypass 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 predominately involve replacement of parts or equipment in-kind, or addition of a single component, such as LED light bulbs or backup motors, to existing infrastructure.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There may be minor and temporary amounts of exhaust produced by construction or delivery vehicles. The emissions would be of short duration and consistent in amount and duration with routine vehicle use at the facility. There would be no long-term effects to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise is anticipated during maintenance 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: Project activities would be implemented by the screen facility operators. At facilities where the land is owned by a different entity than the operator, land use or other special use agreements exist that define how the work would be coordinated with the landowner and the manner in which the work would be completed.

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

Signed:

Jacquelyn Schei
Environmental Protection Specialist