

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** YTAHP Wenas Creek RM 12 Fish Screens and Pump Intakes Project

**Project No.:** 2007-398-00

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

**Location:** Yakima County, Washington

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD) through the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP) to install Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)-compliant fish screens on existing irrigation intakes and modify the existing intakes to allow for the installation of the compliant fish screens. Wenas Creek is utilized by Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead, Chinook and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes. ESA-listed bull trout are present in the Yakima River and may utilize the lower reaches of Wenas Creek for overwintering habitat.

NYCD would install two WDFW and NMFS-compliant fish screens on an existing irrigation pump diversion in Wenas Creek at River Mile (RM) 12. The fish screens (self-cleaning suction screens) would be placed by hand, using hand tools, on the pump intakes pipes. To make the existing pump system compatible with the new screens, the existing intake hoses would be replaced with metal pipes, and a pressure backwash system would be installed. There would be no ground disturbance or instream work associated with the project. The screens would prevent fish entrainment into the irrigation system and would be removed from the stream when not in use. NYCD would implement the activities in the spring of 2026.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills commitments under 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 Biological Opinion (2020 USFWS 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. 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 the current *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures*, 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.

Brenda Aguirre  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation

This evaluation 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: YTAHP Wenas Creek RM 12 Fish Screens and Pump Intakes Project

### Project Site Description

The project site is located on Wenas Creek at RM 12 within the Wenas Creek Watershed of the Upper Yakima River Subbasin. Wenas Creek is a tributary to the Yakima River at RM 122. The legal description of the project site is T15N, R17E, Sec 13. The surrounding area is used for agricultural crop production.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

#### 1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA determined implementation of the proposed activity would have no potential to cause effects on March 11, 2026.

#### 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of soil disturbance while accessing and leaving the work site via foot and vehicle. No ground disturbance is proposed for installation and there would be no long-term impacts to existing soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status plant species present. The project would have short-term effects on vegetation due to human trampling of some vegetation while working at and accessing and leaving the work site; there would be no long-term impacts to the existing vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status wildlife species or designated habitat present. Some disturbance to non-listed wildlife during project activities may occur due to human presence. Any impact would be short term and consistent with existing site conditions associated with the operation of agricultural equipment.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and their designated critical habitat are present in the project area. ESA-listed bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) are present in the Yakima River and may utilize the lower reaches of Wenas

Creek for overwintering habitat. NYCD would utilize Best Management Practices to avoid and minimize impacts to fish during project implementation (the fish screens would be placed by hand on the pump intake pipes in the dry; no in-water work). Some minor disturbance to fish during project activities may occur due to removal and replacement of the pump fish screens from the creek. Any impacts would be short term, and the overall impact would be beneficial to all fish species. Project activities are not expected to impact water bodies or floodplains.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose new wells or use of groundwater.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose changes to land use; designated farmland would not be taken out of production.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose changes to visual quality; the fish screens and pump intake pipes would be visually consistent with agricultural irrigation infrastructure.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions while accessing and leaving the work site; there would be no long-term impacts to air quality.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be short-term implementation noise during daylight hours while vehicles access and leave the project site. This noise would not be noticeably different from the surrounding agricultural production noise.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work is not considered hazardous, nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the public. 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: The proposed work would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. NYCD has coordinated with the underlying landowner and has permission to conduct project activities.

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