

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Spokane Tribe McCoy Lake Dock Repair

**Project No.:** 2024-003-00

**Project Manager:** Carlos Matthew, EWU-4

**Location:** Stevens 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 Spokane Tribe of Indians (Spokane Tribe) to conduct a dock repair project on McCoy Lake in Stevens County, Washington. This project would provide safe and effective access for Tribal communities, including ADA and tribal elders, for fishing, recreation, including providing subsistence to their families. Funding the proposed action fulfills ongoing commitments under a 10-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between BPA and the Spokane Tribe, which was signed in May 2024 and formalizes a long-standing collaborative partnership that provides a dedicated funding mechanism for habitat restoration, among other activities in the upper Columbia River Basin. In addition, this action supports ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the main stem 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.).

The project activities would occur at the dock on the west side of McCoy Lake and take approximately seven days to complete. There is an existing concrete pad that anchors the existing dock segments, up to approximately 30 years old, to the shoreline. The existing dock segments would be connected to the concrete pad while adding new floating dock segments and a ramp. To ensure stability through seasonal lake level fluctuations, the new dock would be anchored in the lake using several new steel pilings. These pilings would be driven directly into the lakebed without the need for dredging, excavation, or removal of soil. Should any new landings need to be constructed on the shoreline, no digging would occur and they would be either poured concrete or secured with more posts driven directly into the ground. All construction staging for materials and equipment would take place in the developed and/or previously-disturbed upland area adjacent to the existing dock.

**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.

Daphne Day  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel  
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:** Spokane Tribe McCoy Lake Dock Repair

## **Project Site Description**

McCoy Lake is the largest inland lake within the boundaries of the Spokane Indian Reservation in Stevens County, Washington. It has a surface area of 37.2 acres, a maximum depth of 55 feet, and a volume of 938 acre-feet. The McCoy Lake area is a closed surface-water basin that includes the lake and a valley that extends eastward, then northward to a narrow divide just south of the reservation boundary. In 1998, the McCoy Lake water system was constructed, which is owned and operated by the Tribe and provides water to hundreds of customers in the McCoy Lake area. In 2006, the Tribe conducted a restoration project which restored flows from McCoy Creek to the watershed and McCoy Lake, increasing water depth at the lake. McCoy Creek now recharges the lake during spring runoff; the snow-driven creek often dries up in late summer and fall. Habitat present includes the main lentic area with riparian areas along the lake, with deciduous shrublands and ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forest surrounding the area.

McCoy Lake serves as a significant cultural and subsistence resource for the Spokane Tribe, providing opportunities for fishing and non-motorized recreation. A boat launch, dock, vaulted restroom, day-use area, and camping area are located on the northwest, community side of the lake. Another boat launch, dock, vaulted restroom and day-use area are located on the northeast shoreline of the lake. A third day-use area, campsite, and dock are located on the eastern shoreline. Access to the lake is restricted to Tribal members, their descendants, and spouses. The Tribe's hatchery stocks the lake with trout and salmon to support its recreational and subsistence fishery. The fishery primarily consists of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), which are regularly stocked to support a put-and-take fishery, as well as largemouth bass (*Micropterus nigricans*) and starting in 2022, smallmouth bass (*M. dolomieu*). A winter fish kill occurred in 2017. Historically, the lake was the most popular fishing spot on the reservation, also producing brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and kokanee (*O. nerka*).

Primary concerns for McCoy Lake are low dissolved oxygen, high water temperatures, and large algal blooms. Nutrient levels entering from McCoy Creek are not excessively high; however, the lack of outlet in the lake allows the nutrients within the lake to continually cycle and to accumulate, creating large algal blooms that can deter recreation and fishing.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On April 6, 2026, BPA initiated consultation and determined that due to previous disturbance, the discrete footprint of the undertaking, and minimal ground disturbance proposed, the implementation of the proposed undertaking will result in no historic properties affected; §36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Consulting parties included the Spokane Tribe of Indians and Spokane Tribal Historic Preservation Office (Spokane THPO). On April 7, 2026, Spokane THPO responded that the project may proceed as planned, with a Post-Review Discovery Protocol.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, work shall be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by the Spokane THPO and in consultation with BPA. Please ensure that the Sponsor has a copy of BPA's Post-Review Discovery Procedure.

## **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project involves no dredging, excavation, or filling. Pilings would be driven directly into the lakebed, and any concrete landings on the shoreline would be poured without digging. This would result in only minor, localized displacement of lakebed soils immediately around the pilings and would not significantly impact geology or soil profiles.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would be limited to the footprint of the existing dock and the immediate shoreline access and staging areas, which are already impacted by ongoing recreational use. No removal of riparian vegetation is proposed. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), BPA utilized the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool in September 2025, which listed the federally-threatened Spalding's catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*) as a potentially-present species; no designated critical habitat is present. This small, perennial herb is generally found in dry upland prairies and unlikely to occur within the proposed project area around inland lakes and streams. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status species or habitats that may be in project areas and would not result in long-term impact to other plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are many wildlife species present throughout the reservation, including large mammals like deer, elk, moose, bear, and cougar, and important species for hunting like waterfowl and upland game species. Per the USFWS IPAC tool, the list of ESA-listed threatened or endangered species is limited to the yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). While suitable habitat is potentially present at some of the field sites, the yellow-billed cuckoo is functionally extinct in the state of Washington, with no known occurrences near the project area. Thus, the species are unlikely to occur near the project area and the proposed action is unlikely to have any effect. Two proposed species, the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), also have the potential to occur and may be affected by proposed actions through trampling of host plants; however, the project is unlikely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species. Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), which is federally-delisted but still considered threatened by the state, is known to occur in the vicinity. If present during construction, the project would cause temporary and localized disturbance to wolves, as well as other common wildlife, due to noise and human presence. The habitat is already subject to regular human use associated with the existing dock. These temporary disturbances, which would take place over a week or less, are not expected to have a significant or long-term impact on wildlife populations or special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project involves in-water work in McCoy Lake; however, the activity (driving pilings for a pier) does not require a CWA Section 404 permit per 33 CFR 323.2(c). In-water work is limited to driving pilings, which may cause temporary and localized turbidity. Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be implemented to minimize water quality impacts and following completion of the proposed actions, suspended sediments would resettle and turbidity would return to pre-existing conditions. The new dock replaces an existing structure and does not alter the lake's floodplain.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is located on the shoreline and in the open water of McCoy Lake. No wetlands would be directly impacted by the dock replacement activities.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is a surface-level and surface-water project. No deep excavation or drilling that could intersect with groundwater is proposed. The project would not impact groundwater resources or the nearby community water system wells.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project replaces an existing recreational dock "in-kind" and is consistent with the established land use of the area for the Spokane Tribe's recreational purposes. There are no specially-designated areas present in or around the project area.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Replacing a dock described as being "in disrepair" with a new, modern structure is expected to result in a neutral to minor positive impact on visual quality.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary emissions from construction vehicles and equipment are expected during the construction period. These emissions would be localized and are not expected to exceed air quality standards.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise would be generated from construction activities, particularly from the equipment used to drive piles. These impacts would be temporary, short-term, and limited to daytime hours during the construction period.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Replacing a dock currently "in disrepair" would result in a long-term improvement to safety for recreational users. Standard construction safety protocols would be implemented during the project to protect workers and the public.

## **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 project would occur on land owned by the Spokane Tribe. No coordination or outreach would be required.

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

Signed:

Daphne Day  
Environmental Protection Specialist