

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Hayden Creek Rotary Screw Trap Relocation

**Project No.:** 2010-072-00

**Project Manager:** Virginia Preiss, EWM-4

**Location:** Lemhi County, Idaho

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.20 Protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife habitat; B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) along with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery fund proposes to fund the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) to relocate a rotary screw trapping operation on Hayden Creek in Lemhi County, Idaho. Monitoring of aquatic species, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), steelhead (*O. mykiss*), and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), is critical to understanding the status of species and the effects of local restoration projects aiming to improve fish habitat. Trap efficiency at the existing location is poor and operations have to stop several times throughout the trapping season due to low flows. A proposed habitat project in the area, planned for 2027, would result in even lower trap efficiency.

The project proposes to install the trap and a prefabricated equipment shed downstream of the current location, on property owned by IDFG. IDFG would prepare the new site by implementing instream habitat improvements, improving the site for the equipment shed, and installing a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) antenna array in Hayden Creek downstream of the trap.

Instream work would occur over about 300 feet of the creek. A pool would be excavated at a bend in the creek (about 800 cubic yards of sediment removed). A log structure would be installed along the east bank on the outside of the bend to focus flow and maintain pool scour. The log structure would be constructed by excavating the bank and trenches perpendicular to the bank, placing boulders at the toe of the bank. Two logs (about 30 feet to 35 feet in length) would then be placed beside each other and parallel to the bank. Smaller logs (about 25 feet in length) would be placed perpendicular to the bank, with one end overlapping the larger logs and the other end placed in an excavated trench. Larger logs would be stacked five high with three to four smaller logs placed between larger logs along with native fill. Logs would be pinned together with rebar and the structure would be backfilled with native material to rebuild the bank and match the existing grade of adjacent banks. The top of the bank would be planted with live willow stakes. About 80 feet of riprap (large, angular rock) on the east bank would be reshaped upstream of the log structure to help maintain pool scour and would be planted with live willow stakes. About 35 large boulders (16 inches in diameter and larger) would be randomly placed immediately downstream of the wood structure and across the width of the creek to provide habitat.

Near the bank, there is existing power that historically supplied power to a pump station that has since been removed. The last power pole in the line, closest to the creek, would be replaced in coordination with the local utility. About 30 feet by 20 feet of land near the bank and existing power poles would be first used as a staging area and then leveled for shed placement. The shed (about 20 feet by 10 feet) would be placed on the leveled ground and connected to power from the existing line. Eco-blocks would be partially buried into each bank near the new pool to serve as anchors for the trap. The trap would be placed in the new pool immediately upstream of the log structure using a boom truck and would be connected to the eco-blocks with cables.

A PIT tag antenna array would be installed in Hayden Creek by anchoring the antennas to the creek using earth anchors installed by hand. Cabling from the antenna array would be buried in a trench running from the array to the shed.

One equipment and material staging area (about 0.6 acres) would be established within an existing staging area for other projects. Access routes would be on existing roads or on a temporary access route (about 300 feet) created for construction. The temporary access route would be created by placing wood chips (about 6 inches deep and 16 feet wide) on existing ground and installing a temporary culvert to allow crossing over an irrigation ditch. Equipment needed for the project would include a large excavator, dump truck, road grader, boom truck, and a variety of service vehicles. Temporarily disturbed areas, with the exception of the temporary access route, would be decompacted (up to 8 inches), seeded, and mulched after construction. Wood chips placed for the temporary access route would be raked by hand to distribute them over existing ground and left to decompose naturally. The culvert in the temporary access route would be removed after construction.

The site would be monitored for several years after construction is complete. If failures in system function, structure function, or integrity occur; or if there are increased risks to infrastructure, riverscape processes, or fish passage, the project's adaptive management procedures would be implemented. These procedures may include installation of new structures of the same type originally installed, modification of structures, or channel fill or excavation. Adaptive management procedures (replanting/reseeding) may also be implemented if willows have low survival. If needed, herbicide applications would be applied in subsequent years if monitoring shows encroachment by invasive species.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills commitments under the 2020 NMFS Columbia River System Biological Opinion and the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Columbia River System BiOp. These actions also support Bonneville's 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 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.

Jacquelyn Schei  
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: Hayden Creek Rotary Screw Trap Relocation

### Project Site Description

The project site is along Highway 28 about 27 miles southeast of Salmon, Idaho. The site is on an alluvial fan near the outlet of Hayden Creek where it flows into the Lemhi River. This reach is important for juvenile Chinook and steelhead hatched in the Upper Lemhi and Hayden Creek. However, human impacts in the area, such as railroad and highway construction and diking projects, have channelized the stream into a homogenous single thread with little floodplain connection or diversity of depth, cover, or other aquatic habitat values. In the project reach, Hayden Creek is a simplified, straightened, and confined channel with a high gradient. The available floodplain is confined by bedrock or hillslopes on one side and Hayden Creek Road on the other. The bank in this area is armored with riprap to prevent bank erosion and limit flooding impacts to the road and agricultural fields. Riparian vegetation is limited, discontinuous, and sparse, worsened by the armored bank. Mature cottonwoods exist in a thin band immediately adjacent to the channel in some places on the opposite bank. Upland from the bank is a flat, grassy area that is part of a larger staging area currently used for other IDFG habitat restoration projects and was likely partially graded from past construction actions in the area.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

#### 1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On February 9, 2026, BPA sent a letter to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) with a summary of efforts made to identify historic properties. Previous cultural resource surveys identified resources in the project area eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The resources cannot be entirely avoided; however, proposed actions would be temporary in nature and would not alter any character-defining features. Therefore, BPA determined that the project would have no adverse effect to historic properties (BPA Cultural Resources Project No.: ID 2025 059). On February 13, 2026, BPA received concurrence from SHPO. No responses were received from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation.

Notes:

- An avoidance area has been added to design plans. IDFG shall ensure construction vehicles accessing the site do not stray from the temporary access route.
- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

#### 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary impacts to geology and soils due to displacement and compaction of soil from the operation of heavy equipment to excavate the creek bed to create a pool, place habitat boulders, install the wood structure anchored into the bank, and modify the armored section of bank. Erosion and sediment control best management

practices, including instream work area isolation with coffer dams, would be implemented prior to work to minimize potential for instream turbidity or excessive runoff during construction. Work areas would be contoured to match the surrounding grade after construction and seeded with native, riparian plant species to facilitate soil recovery. Impacts to biological components of soils from future post-construction herbicide application would be minimized by application according to manufacturer's labels and compliance with the conservation measures in BPA's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program ESA Section 7 programmatic consultations (HIP BiOps).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed plant species or state special-status plants are known to be present in the project area. There would be temporary impacts to existing vegetation including crushing and removal by heavy equipment, excavation, and trampling from work crews. Mature trees and shrubs in the project area would be avoided. Impacts would be minimized by using existing access routes where possible and planting native vegetation and seeding disturbed areas after construction to help restore native plant communities. Minor and temporary vegetation disturbances would occur as part of future herbicide application. Impacts of herbicide applications would be minimized by implementation of proposed actions according to BPA's HIP BiOps. In the long term, there would be beneficial effects from native planting and seeding and removal of competitive invasive plants, allowing native plant communities to grow after construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed or state special-status wildlife species or habitats are found within the project site. The USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) tool lists the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*), both ESA-listed Threatened, as having the potential to be in the project area. In addition, IPaC lists the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), ESA-proposed Threatened, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), ESA-proposed Endangered, as having the potential to be present in the project area. There are no critical habitats for ESA-listed or proposed species in the project area and no confirmed presence of any of the species in the project area. Due to current agricultural land use practices, proximity to a state highway and ongoing restoration projects, and lack of native vegetation, it is highly unlikely these species would be present. Therefore, there would be no impact to ESA-listed or proposed wildlife species from the project.

IPaC information indicates that bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) have been known to be present in Lemhi County during the time of year when proposed activities would occur. There is no confirmed presence of nests or previously used nest sites for either species in the project area. If a nest is observed in the project area, IDFG would employ protection measures (e.g., timing, distance) as necessary to ensure eagles would not be harmed by the project. Therefore, the project would have no adverse impacts to bald and golden eagles.

No wildlife habitat would be modified to a degree that would permanently displace resident wildlife, though some may be temporarily displaced by disturbance from construction activities and human presence. Herbicide application would have short-term impacts to wildlife that would be minimized by application according to the manufacturer label. In the long term, the project would restore native, riparian vegetation that would provide more habitat for wildlife than exists now.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: ESA-listed Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout, and their critical habitat, are found in the project area. No state special-status species occupy the project area. Excavation to create a pool, installing the large wood structure, placing instream habitat boulders, and reshaping the armored bank would have temporary negative impacts to fish and fish habitat, specifically sediment transport and delivery and displacement of individuals. Impacts would be limited to the time of construction (primarily during excavation) and would not be expected to last more than several hours. The project was reviewed and consulted on under BPA's HIP BiOps and would adhere to all applicable conservation measures, including turbidity monitoring requirements, adhering to the approved in-water work period, using erosion control measures throughout the project area for the duration of construction, and isolation of instream work areas using coffer dams. IDFG would conduct salvage efforts to remove aquatic organisms in isolated work areas and move them back to the free-flowing creek prior to the start of work in those areas. The project would obtain a required permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and a Section 401 water quality certification from Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. The project would adhere to all requirements and prescriptions set forth in the permit and certification.

Some aquatic invertebrates and amphibians may be displaced or killed by mechanical activities, but quick re-occupation of this site by the same or other members of the same classes of animals after construction is anticipated. Herbicide application may have effects on ESA-listed species in the project area. However, the project would follow BPA's HIP BiOps conservation measures to minimize impacts. No herbicide would be applied in-water and required buffer distances would be followed during application. Overall, the proposed actions would provide improved habitat for juvenile salmon and bull trout, improved riparian cover, and fish presence data from the PIT array that would benefit management.

Notes:

- Prior to in-water construction, IDFG would obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit and Section 401 certification and adhere to all terms and conditions.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No jurisdictional wetlands were identified during a survey of the project area; thus, the proposed actions do not have the potential to impact wetlands.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or uses of groundwater are proposed. There would be potential for contamination of groundwater from fuel or fluid drips or spills from the heavy equipment used, but spills and drips with the volume necessary to contaminate groundwater are unlikely. Onsite spill kits would also minimize the potential for spills and drips to contaminate groundwater. Herbicide impacts to groundwater and aquifers would be minimized by application according to the manufacturer's label and following BPA's HIP BiOps requirements. Activities may result in a minor increase in groundwater storage from an increase in native, riparian plants in the project area.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The underlying land use would not change and the project is not in a specially-designated area. IDFG purchased the property to support improvement and restoration projects for fish and wildlife.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No work would occur in visually sensitive areas. Temporary and permanent changes would occur during project implementation. Short-term visual changes would include work zone conditions, work crews, and vehicles. Visually, this would be similar to the adjacent land where there is an existing staging and materials storage area that IDFG has been using for restoration projects in the area for the past several years. Long term, the trap, equipment shed, and the increase in riparian vegetation would be permanent visual changes and could be seen from Hayden Creek Road and Highway 28. These visual changes would be relatively minor as the shed would be a small structure, painted dark green, and placed near the bank where there are mature cottonwood trees. The instream and riparian restoration work would return the location to a more natural condition.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minor, temporary effects to air quality from exhaust and dust from vehicles and equipment and from herbicide application. Herbicide effects would be minimized by application according to the manufacturer's label. Dust and emissions from vehicles and equipment would be similar to those occurring during normal agricultural operations and to similar activities occurring in the adjacent staging and equipment area. Normal conditions would return upon project completion.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would result in a temporary increase in ambient noise. Any noise emitted from construction equipment would be short-term and temporary, occur during daylight hours, and cease after project completion. Noise from construction is not expected to exceed the typical noise from agricultural equipment, equipment from other restoration projects occurring nearby, or vehicles on the highway.

## 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 general public. Operating construction vehicles and equipment inherently carries potential safety risks to operators, however, staff training and implementing best management practices, such as daily on-site safety precautions, would minimize risks during construction activities. Herbicide application poses a slight risk of skin and eye irritations, cuts, and bruises. Application would be by a licensed applicator who would develop an herbicide transportation and safety plan before transporting or applying any herbicides, thus making the risk from herbicides insignificant.

## **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: IDFG would be implementing the proposed actions on its own property.

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