

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YTAHP Naneum Creek RM 3.75 Fish Passage Project

Project No.: 2007-398-00

Project Manager: Daniel Newberry, EWU-4

Location: Kittitas 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 Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD), under the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP), to implement the Naneum Creek at River Mile (RM) 3.75 Fish Passage Project on private land near Ellensburg, Washington. The project would benefit Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead, Chinook, and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes.

The project proposes to restore full fish passage at the intersection of a private road and Naneum Creek. Currently, the creek makes a sharp 90-degree turn through an undersized corrugated metal culvert, creating high stream flow velocities that act as a partial (33%) fish passage barrier. To resolve this, KCCD would replace the existing culvert with a 38-foot, 3-sided precast concrete culvert, while realigning both the creek and the road to widen the stream's approach angle. The project would incorporate stream simulation material to control the channel grade upstream and downstream of the crossing, install large wood for bank protection at the culvert entrance, and deposit spawning gravels in the upstream reach. Additionally, an existing 10-inch PVC irrigation pipeline that currently rests in a cutout on top of the culvert would be replaced with an inverted PVC siphon buried beneath the creek bed to maintain agricultural water delivery.

To minimize aquatic and water quality impacts during construction, work would be performed in the dry using a coffer dam and stream bypass system. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) biologists would conduct fish salvage operations and deploy block nets to isolate the active work area. Heavy equipment, such as an excavator equipped with a thumb, would be utilized with all access and staging restricted to existing roads and previously disturbed areas. The in-water work is scheduled to take place between October and February, avoiding the active irrigation season, and concluding prior to February 15 to protect migrating and spawning steelhead. The overall project footprint would encompass approximately 1 acre of primarily agricultural fields, existing roadways, and riparian vegetation consisting mostly of non-native or invasive grasses, shrubs, and trees. Disturbed areas would be fully revegetated with native plant species upon completion of construction, which is scheduled for Fall of 2026.

Funding for the proposed actions would support the conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System, and BPA'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. 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:

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: YTAHP Naneum Creek RM 3.75 Fish Passage Project

Project Site Description

The project site is located within the Naneum Creek Watershed of the Upper Yakima River Subbasin. Naneum Creek is a tributary to Wilson Creek, which is a tributary to the Yakima River at RM 147. The legal description is T17N, R19E, Sec 8. The elevation is about 1,550 feet. The surrounding area is flat and used for agricultural crop production and livestock grazing. Vegetation within the project area consists of a mix of native and non-native riparian area trees, forbs, and grasses.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Section 106 consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (Colville), and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation) on April 7, 2026. DAHP concurred with the Area of Potential Effects on the same day. BPA submitted a survey report and determined on May 19, 2026, that the proposed fish passage project would result in no historic properties affected. DAHP concurred with BPA's determination on the same day. No other comments were received during the 30-day comment period ending June 18, 2026.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation, 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: The project would disturb soil during project activities. Sediment control best management practices would be installed prior to project implementation to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or excessive runoff during construction. Post construction planting of disturbed areas with native vegetation would minimize long-term erosion potential.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status, including ESA-listed, plant species are known to be present. The project would have an effect on plants due to equipment crushing some plants while accessing work areas and removal of vegetation during construction activities. Post construction planting would re-establish areas of disturbed and removed vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special status, including ESA-listed, wildlife species or designated critical habitats are known to be present. The project would temporarily disturb/displace area wildlife due to increased noise and vehicle traffic, operation of heavy equipment, and human presence during project implementation. Wildlife would likely avoid the area during this time and return once the project work is completed. Post-construction revegetation with native plants would re-establish areas of disturbed habitat and provide improved habitat for area wildlife.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Naneum Creek would be placed in a stream bypass during construction, allowing work to occur in isolation from flowing water during the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife approved in-water work window of October 1 to February 15 (outside of the irrigation season and before ESA-listed steelhead migration and spawning) to minimize impacts to aquatic life and water quality. The project would generate turbidity while working in Naneum Creek. KCCD would follow all terms and conditions in their Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit and 401 Water Quality Certification coverage under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 27 for aquatic habitat restoration activities. There would be no net rise in floodplain elevations from implementation of the project activities. The project would subject fish to short-term impacts from handling during fish salvage, increased noise from vehicles and human presence in the project area, turbidity during instream activities, and disturb approximately 0.1 acre of stream habitat. ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and their designated critical habitat are present in the project area. The general and activity-specific conservation measures from BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) biological opinion from NMFS would be followed during project implementation to avoid and minimize impacts to fish. The proposed activities would aid in reestablishing full fish passage and improving fish habitat.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities would not propose new wells or the use of groundwater; spill prevention measures would be present on-site during use of heavy equipment.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be a minor change to visuals from the new culvert, road and channel realignments, irrigation piping placed under the streambed, and revegetation of disturbed areas. The new conditions would be visually consistent with the topography of the existing

site, surrounding area, and adjacent vegetation. Construction equipment would be visually consistent with area agricultural equipment. The project is not within a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions during temporary construction activity.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be short-term construction noise during daylight hours. Construction noise would not be noticeably different than the surrounding agricultural production noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project sponsor is required to use best management practices to protect workers' health and safety. Any activities involving hazardous materials would include the disposal of such materials at a designated hazardous waste facility.

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: Implementation of project activities would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor, KCCD, has coordinated with the underlying landowner and irrigation water user 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