

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YTAHP Rattlesnake Creek RM 0.37 Fish Screen 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), under the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP), to install a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) compliant fish screen on the end of an existing irrigation pump intake hose on private land approximately 13 miles northwest of Naches, Washington. The project would benefit Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead and bull trout, as well as Chinook and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes.

NYCD would install a compliant, passive fish screen on the existing intake hose in Rattlesnake Creek at River Mile (RM) 0.37 to prevent fish entrainment in the irrigation system. Passive fish screens sit on the stream bed. The fish screen would be placed on the pump intake hose by hand in the dry (no in-water work); there would be no disturbance to the creek bed while attaching the screen to the intake hose. NYCD would install the fish screen onto the intake hose in the Fall of 2026.

Funding the proposed activity would support the conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with NMFS and U.S. Fish Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System. Funding the proposed activity would 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:

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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on Rattlesnake Creek at RM 0.37 within the Tieton River-Naches River Watershed of the Yakima River Subbasin. Rattlesnake Creek is a tributary to the Naches River which is a tributary to the Yakima River. The legal description of the project site is T15N, R15E, Sec 3. The elevation of the project site is approximately 1,960 feet. Vegetation and land use in the project area consists of scattered trees, shrubs, and grasses; agricultural crop production; livestock grazing; and rural residential.

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 July 13, 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; 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 species are present. The project would have short-term effects on vegetation due to human trampling of some vegetation while working at and accessing 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:

Explanation: No special-status species or designated critical habitat is present. Some disturbance to area wildlife during project activities may occur due to human presence. Any impact would be short term.

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 Rattlesnake Creek and use the lower reaches as migration

habitat. NYCD would utilize Best Management Practices to avoid and minimize impacts to fish during project implementation (the fish screen would be placed by hand on the pump intake hose in the dry; no in-water work). Some disturbance to non-listed fish during project activities may occur due to removal and replacement of the pump intake hose 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: No wetlands present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater are proposed.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not involve changes to visual quality; the fish screen would be visually consistent with the agricultural irrigation infrastructure.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would generate small, temporary 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 project would not involve the use of hazardous materials or propose work in areas of known soil contamination.

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: Installation of the fish screen would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. NYCD has coordinated with the 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