

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Moses Creek and Lower Lost Creek Instream Structures

**Project No.:** 1990-018-00

**Project Manager:** Jamie Cleveland, EWU-4

**Location:** Okanogan County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 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 Colville Confederated Tribe (CCT) to construct instream structures [Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA) and Post Assisted Log Structures (PALS)] at two sites within the Sanpoil subbasin to increase stream channel complexity and aid in floodplain re-connection. Funding the proposed activities fulfills BPA's commitments to the CCT under the 2018 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the FCRPS 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.).

Construction would utilize hand tools, hand placing of wood pieces, and potentially a hydraulic post pounder. Posts made of untreated lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, or western larch would be driven into the streambed approximately 3 feet deep and then woven with branches. Post height would be trimmed and leveled to 18 to 24 inches above the low flow water surface to encourage sheet flow and reduce scouring. Vegetation materials for the structures would be locally sourced or gathered on-site. Between 3 and 6 structures would be installed at each site with a combination of full-channel and partial-channel spanning structures.

Monitoring would include visual inspection of condition and function of structures annually or after flood events. Ongoing operation and maintenance activities would include replacing or adding posts and woven materials, increasing post height, and extending structure width as the desired streambank lateral movement occurs. Additional structures (one or two per year at each site) may be added within the original project extent in accordance with the project adaptive management plan to ensure proper site function.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) 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), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- 1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);

- 2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- 3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Carolyn Sharp

Carolyn Sharp

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

September 17, 2020

Sarah T. Biegel

Date

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist 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: Moses Creek and Lower Lost Creek Instream Structures**

## **Project Site Description**

Both project sites are located within the Sanpoil River Watershed. Historical livestock grazing practices have degraded riparian conditions to the extent that the stream reach is devoid of canopy cover. Both sites formerly have existing cattle exclusion fencing installed by CCT to reduce grazing pressure on the riparian corridor. Historic livestock grazing practices degraded riparian conditions and invasive reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) has inhibited the natural regeneration of a healthy native riparian community. The sites have had previous revegetation efforts targeted at increasing riparian shade and suppressing the reed canarygrass.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Project location is within the boundaries of the CCT Reservation and Traditional Territories. Therefore, consultation with CCT occurred with two determinations of no adverse effect (BPA CR No: WA 2020 075 on June 16, 2020 for Lost Loony Creek and WA 2020 185 on June 17, 2020 for Moses Creek). Concurrence from THPO received June 18, 2020.

Notes:

- Per THPO direction, project sponsor would follow an Inadvertent Discovery Plan should cultural resources be identified during project implementation.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction would involve minimal ground disturbance. Posts would be driven into the ground, and excavation would not be required.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status species or habitat present. Installation of structures would involve minimal ground disturbance at each post hole, but no excavation. Project would increase local water table that would improve success of riparian plantings and facilitate natural revegetation through the dry summer months.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status species or designated habitat present. Construction is with handtools and small crew of workers. Does not produce noise during installation. Long-term benefits as water table rises in the surrounding area, improving riparian vegetation and wildlife habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project sites are above anadromy and thus federally-listed fish species are not present. Project is designed to improve interior redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*) specifically, but would create pools for thermal refuge and shade that would benefit all resident fish species. The project would allow for improved floodplain engagement.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Sites are within a USFWS NWI mapped wetland, but the project would not disturb the ground. Work would involve pounding posts in the ground, and no excavation or other ground disturbance would occur. The project would benefit local wetland conditions by raising the water table and reengaging the floodplain.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Installation would not negatively affect groundwater or aquifers. Posts would be driven to a depth of 3 feet into the stream bed and bank. Restoration activities would result in a local increase in groundwater storage through improved floodplain function.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur. No specially-designated areas are present.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would have little to no effect on visual quality. The new structures would be visually consistent with adjacent vegetation and would not be located in a visually sensitive area.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no impact on air quality. Work would be done manually or with hand operated tools and would not require heavy machinery.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work involves driving posts into the ground with a manual post pounder, or alternately with hand-operated gas or hydraulic post drivers if site conditions necessitate. Associated noise would be minimal and work duration would be a day or two at most.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would not be considered hazardous nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the general 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: Project would be implemented on tribally owned land by the CCT. CCT would obtain appropriate Tribal permits prior to implementation.

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

Signed: /s/ Carolyn Sharp September 17, 2020  
Carolyn Sharp, ECF-4, Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist