

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: January 20, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: R. Beaty
Project Manager – KEWU-4

Proposed Action: Multi-Species Acclimation Project – Heath Pond

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 2009-001-00

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

Location: Winthrop, Okanogan, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Yakama Nation (YN)

Description of the Proposed Action: The Yakama Nation proposes to acclimate approximately 50,000 spring Chinook at the Heath/Hardy pond site in the Methow basin in spring of 2012. The YN seeks to aid in spring Chinook recovery by increasing the species' survival and distribution throughout the upper Methow basin. It is expected that this can be achieved by taking some of the spring Chinook currently reared and released in large groups from the Methow State Fish Hatchery under a Grant County Public Utility District (GCPUD) mitigation program, and acclimating them in small groups in ponds located throughout the upper areas of the basin. The Methow Hatchery is owned by Douglas County PUD (DCPUD) and operated by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

The Yakama Nation's proposal to acclimate approximately 50,000 spring Chinook at the Heath/Hardy site is part of a larger experimental program to acclimate multiple species (steelhead, spring Chinook, and coho) together in small groups throughout the Methow and Wenatchee basins. This program was proposed as part of the 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords Memorandum of Agreement between BPA, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and other tribes. It was also recommended by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council to BPA for funding on January 13, 2010.

The Heath/Hardy site is owned by a private landowner that is currently in process of obtaining a conservation easement on the property through the Methow Conservancy. The YN is coordinating with the Methow Conservancy and the landowner to insure that the project would not affect the conservation easement. No construction would be required for the acclimation. The spring Chinook juveniles would be trucked to the site from the Methow Hatchery in March and placed in the pond. Nets would be used to temporarily hold the fish in the ponds until they

are fully acclimated and ready to smolt, about 6-8 weeks. The nets would then be removed and the fish allowed to migrate downstream.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

This proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Nancy H. Weintraub
Nancy H. Weintraub
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Richard Yarde
Richard Yarde
Acting NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: January 20, 2012

Attachment:
CX Checklist

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Multi-Species Acclimation – Heath Pond

F&W Project#: 2009-001-00 Contract 55960

This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) Releases of hatchery spring Chinook produced at the Methow Hatchery are included in an Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 10 Permit #1196 from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and a cooperative agreement between Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 6 of the ESA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed /s/ Nancy Weintraub
Nancy Weintraub

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