

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Deschutes River Sockeye Development Project

Project No.: 2008-307-00

Project Manager: Corrie Veenstra

Location: Jefferson County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration proposes to fund the development of a model to predict outmigrating kokanee (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) smolt, including providing assistance to ongoing research and monitoring. Within the Deschutes River subbasin, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon (CTWSRO), Portland General Electric (PGE), and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) conduct *O. nerka* investigations cooperatively.

The proposed actions include:

1. The operation and maintenance of the Suttle Lake/Lake Creek rotary screw trap for kokanee count data.
2. A subsample of fish handled at the trap are tagged for mark-recapture studies.
3. Up to three thousand kokanee would be trapped via seine, tagged, sampled, and released at Lake Billy Chinook.
4. Spawning surveys along Metolius River and tributaries.
5. Tissue sampling at Pelton-Re-regulating Dam from returning kokanee trapped by PGE for transport.

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), Bonneville 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, Bonneville finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 21, 2020

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: Deschutes River Sockeye Development

Project Site Description

Activities would occur at Suttle Lake/Lake Creek trap, Pelton adult trap, Lake Billy Chinook, or the Metolious River watershed in Jefferson County, Oregon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A BPA Archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined they are covered under an existing Section 106 consultation or do not have the potential to cause significant effects to historic properties and are not expected to cause ground disturbance. In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped immediately and a BPA Archaeologist and Historian would be notified, as well as consulting parties. Including the operation of traps that have been anchored to existing structures for over 10 years, BPA determined that there would be no potential to affect historic or cultural properties.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils would not be impacted by the proposed activities.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no anticipated impacts to any plant species, as the proposed action does not include any vegetation management, ground disturbance, or actions that would significantly impact vegetation. Therefore, there is no potential to affect plant communities.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are be no actions that would occur on upland areas. The proposed survey and trapping action would have minor, temporary effects on wildlife due to minimally increased noise and visual disturbance. There would be no new construction or any groundbreaking activities. Therefore, the actions would not impact wildlife within the project area and there would be no effect to wildlife or wildlife habitat.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)



Explanation: Bull trout are not known to inhabit Suttle Lake and are unlikely to be encountered at the trap located in Lake Creek. If bull trout are encountered, all work would stop and the project sponsor would consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologist. Activities in Lake Billy Chinook and Metolious River basin have the potential to impact bull trout, but the proposed activities occur in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and are covered under the Section 6 cooperative agreement with ODFW and the USFWS.

No other ESA-listed fishes are present in project area. In addition to kokanee, other native fish may be encountered during trapping as by-catch, but traps would be checked daily to reduce trapping stress.

The actions would not impact waterbodies or floodplains within the project area and there would be no effect.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project would not take place within or around wetlands and therefore, the activities would not impact wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The activities would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: The activities would not impact or change land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The activities would not impact visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The work would not impact air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Noise levels may be increased, but this would only occur during the normal working hours of the study period.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Safety regulations would be followed as necessary.

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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: This work would be implemented with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on Oregon State land.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran

Date: May 21, 2020

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