

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: ODFW Wood Placement at Flight's End

Project No.: 2011-004-00

Project Manager: Hannah Dondy-Kaplan, EWM-4

Location: Columbia County, OR

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 ODFW to implement a habitat enhancement and wood placement project at their Flight's End wildlife mitigation property in north-central Oregon, which would include staff time to obtain the wood and place the wood structures around the property. The project would include placement of large-diameter trees (approximately 25 inches), root wads, small logs (no more than eight feet long), and branches in wetland and upland habitats to improve habitat complexity by providing cover and breeding habitat for amphibians, reptiles, birds, and small mammals. Each of the nine anticipated basking logs and seven log pile locations would be about 0.007 acres, or 0.11 acres total. The Flight's End property is less than 94 acres in size. Wood for the project would be gathered from within the property boundary, though specific locations are unknown.

Funding for this work partially fulfills commitments made by BPA in the 2010 "Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration." This is part of ongoing efforts to mitigate for the impacts to fish and wildlife from the construction and operation of Federal flood control and hydroelectric facilities in the Willamette River Basin.

The project area is a mix of inundated freshwater emergent wetlands, freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, and riparian woodland habitat. Woody debris would be piled in the transitional area between freshwater wetland and riparian forested areas to serve as protection for wildlife moving between the two habitats. Woody debris would also be placed in wetland areas to create basking structures for western pond turtles and western painted turtles. Small branches on these logs would ideally serve as egg mass attachments for northern red-legged frogs, long-toed salamanders, Pacific chorus frogs, and other amphibians. Wood placed in upland areas would be piled above ground. In wetland areas, wood would be weighted down, free-floating, or connected to existing logs.

All material would be collected on site or transported from existing stockpiles. No ground-disturbing activities are proposed as part of this project. Woody debris would be transported and placed using a compact tractor. No staging areas or road work are proposed to access the site.

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/ Mandy Hope

Mandy Hope
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
ACS Professional Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>October 6, 2020</u>
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: ODFW Wood Placement at Flight's End

Project Site Description

The project area is located on a floodplain of the Columbia River and its associated overflow channel, Multnomah Channel. Part of Sauvie Island, the floodplain is presently used for agriculture and protected wetland habitats that exhibit riparian and wetland associated vegetation and soils. The soils are mapped as Rafton-Sauvie-Moag complex, which are low-lying hydric soils that are frequently flooded and ponded. The soils are incised by swales, lakes, and meandering sloughs and channels that flow north and west into the Multnomah Channel. The swales, lakes and sloughs are likely connected by hyporheic flow and overflow events. Vegetation in the area is characterized by deciduous trees such as ash and cottonwood trees, with an understory of blackberry and invasive reed canary grasses.

Historically, woody debris would have been deposited naturally during flooding events, but have been removed in recent years to facilitate improved visibility for duck and goose hunting. Currently, only three large logs are present in the wetland areas, but their steep slope prohibits turtles from using them.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Consultation was initiated on 8/20/20 under BPA CR Project No. OR 2020 128. Consulting parties included the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz. BPA determined that the implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected (§36 CFR 800.4[d][1]). This determination was based on the results of previous inventory efforts conducted in 2015 and 2017 in support of habitat restoration activities on the Flight's End Property. No comments were received from any of the consulting parties; therefore, BPA assumed concurrence with our effects determination.

Notes:

- The Sponsor would adhere to the Inadvertent Discovery Protocol (IDP) provided by BPA.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Woody debris placement at Flight's End would not involve ground-disturbing activities; thus, there is no potential to affect geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No listed or special-status plant species are documented within the Flight's End project area. There would be temporary, minor short-term negative impacts to existing wetland and upland plant species due to trampling during wood placement activities. Disturbed plants would likely regrow in place or return to pre-implementation conditions in the long-term. No long-term impacts expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: ESA-listed Columbian white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus leucurus*) is documented within the project area. There would be long-term positive impacts to local wildlife, including western pond turtles, western painted turtles, northern red-legged frogs, long-toed salamanders, Pacific chorus frogs, and other amphibians as a result of increased habitat complexity.

Notes:

- ODFW would adhere to all site-specific conservation measures identified in BPA's Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) (HIP Project Notification No. 2021003).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), and coho salmon (*O. kisutch*) inhabit the Lower Columbia River and Multnomah Channel, adjacent to the Flight's End property. The project would not involve in-water work, and the potential for woody debris placement to alter morphology in the reach or to become problematic if mobilized is low. Therefore, there would be no effect to aquatic species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The majority of the Flight's End property contains freshwater emergent and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands. The proposed action would not involve ground disturbance; therefore, no impact is expected.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not affect groundwater or the water table.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing land use would not change as a result of the project. Recreational activities such as hunting would continue on the site. The proposed brush would not interfere with recreational hunting.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Long-term positive impacts to visual quality as a result of increased habitat complexity.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with increased vehicular traffic would occur during project activities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The short-term noise generated by project implementation would not substantially impact the surrounding environment.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and safety.

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: The project site is owned and managed by ODFW. No external coordination is needed to implement the project at this site.

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

Signed: /s/ Mandy Hope _____ October 6, 2020
Mandy Hope, ECF-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
ACS Professional Staffing