

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Adult Upstream Migration Timing Monitoring at Bonneville Dam (*Update to CX published on January 21, 2022*)

Project No.: 2008-518-00

Project Manager: Christine Petersen, EWP-4

Location: Skamania County, Washington

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 (BPA) proposes to fund the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) to collect Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*), and steelhead (*O. mykiss*) at the Bonneville Dam Adult Fish Facility in Skamania County Washington. Captured fish would then be PIT-tagged, sampled for biological information (length, weight, genetic samples), and released. All sampled fish would be collected from the existing adult fish facility. No changes in hydropower or adult fish facility operations would be required to support this work. This work provides genetic samples to CRITFC's genetic assessment program, (BPA contract #2008-907-00). This CX has been updated to reflect that the actions presented in this CX support conservation of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with both National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the USFWS on the O&M of the Columbia River System. These actions also support BPA's commitments to the CRITFC under the 2020 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting 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 (16 U.S.C. 839 *et seq.*).

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/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
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.

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Project Site Description

All fish handling activities would occur within the Bonneville Dam Adult Fish Facility located adjacent to the second powerhouse at river km 235 of the Columbia River in Skamania County, Washington. The site had been heavily modified to accommodate the Bonneville Dam and related infrastructure, including the adult fish facility.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project and all action would occur at existing infrastructure. Therefore, actions proposed by this project would have no potential to impact historic or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, geology and soils would not be impacted by the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project and there are no anticipated impacts to any plant species, and none exist within the immediate area of the facility.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal or other state special-status species wildlife in the project area and there would be no effect.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Fish research on hatchery and wild-origin anadromous salmonids is a common and wide-spread activity within the Columbia River basin and this project would involve the

direct take of several listed species (Chinook salmon, steelhead, and sockeye salmon). The ESA coverage for handling listed fish would be secured through Section-10 permits from the NMFS (Permit 1379) and the USFWS (Recovery Permit TE-227268-4). There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. There is some amount of water diverted for this operation, but it is returned and minor compared to the average Columbia River flows. Therefore, actions proposed would not impact waterbodies or floodplains. Despite short-term adverse impacts from handling the overall impacts would be beneficial to the ESA-listed species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the project would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no ground disturbance proposed by this project. Therefore, the project would not impact or change groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no changes to land use and no impacts to specially designated areas. Therefore, there is no potential to affect land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would occur within the adult fish facility and therefore, there is no potential to affect aural quality activities would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would occur within the adult fish facility and therefore, there is no potential to affect aural quality.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety regulations would be followed during project work.

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: This work would be implemented at Bonneville Dam on property managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

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 November 15, 2022
Israel Duran Date
Environmental Protection Specialist