

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Lake Roosevelt Temporary Protective Fencing for Cultural Resource Sites

Project Manager: Kevin Cannell, ECC-4

Location: Stevens 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 proposes to fund the Spokane Tribe of Indians to install temporary fencing and signage on the Spokane Indian Reservation to protect cultural resources during the spring drawdown on Lake Roosevelt. As an element of the Federal Columbia River Power System Cultural Resources Program, this fencing would restrict access from established roads and user-created trails to portions of the drawdown area with sensitive sites.

Crews would drive on existing access roads to reach 13 discrete locations along the Lake Roosevelt shoreline—3 on the Columbia River mainstem and 10 on the Spokane River arm—where they would use hand tools to install about 6,100 total linear feet of wooden buck-and-pole a-frame fencing and attach signs to that fencing indicating restricted access to the drawdown zone. These segments of 5-foot-high buck-and-pole fencing would sit above the ordinary high-water mark and on the ground, which would not require ground disturbance or vegetation removal to install.

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, July 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/ Jeffrey J. Maslow

Jeffrey J. Maslow

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 19, 2019

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: Lake Roosevelt Temporary Protective Fencing for Cultural Resource Sites

Project Site Description

The project sites are located where trails and roads lead to the shoreline in areas dotted with trees and upland vegetation.

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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> On March 11, 2019, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Spokane Tribe of Indians concurred with Bonneville's No Historic Properties Affected determination. To avoid potential impacts to cultural resources, crews must follow an inadvertent discovery plan that requires stopping all work if project crews encounter artifacts or human remains; notifying the THPO immediately, and maintaining site confidentiality.</p> | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> Because installing the fencing would not involve ground-disturbing activities, there would be no effect on geology and soils.</p> | | |
| 3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> Installation would not disturb the ground. Limited disturbance may occur when installing fences on top of grasses and plants in off-road vegetated areas. A review of ESA-listed plants in Stevens County (Spalding's Catchfly, Water Howellia) reveals that these species are unlikely to occur based on their current known range and on the basis that each site lacks suitable habitat; thus, these ESA-listed plants would experience no effect from the fencing. Overall, the temporary and limited extent of disturbance to plants coupled with low likelihood of special-status plant species occurring at each site provide the basis for little to no expected effects on plants.</p> | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> The buck-and-pole fencing would span short segments, allowing larger animals to pass around and smaller animals and birds to pass under or through between each fence post. Furthermore, using hand tools to install the fences would reduce the likelihood of behavioral responses from nearby wildlife species. In addition, a review of ESA-listed wildlife species in Stevens County (Canada Lynx, Grizzly Bear, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo) indicates that they are unlikely to have habitat or be present near each project site. For these reasons, there would be no effect to these ESA-listed species, and moreover, no expected impacts on wildlife.</p> | | |
| 5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p><u>Explanation:</u> Because the fencing would be located in upland areas and not involve ground-disturbing activities, there would be no effect on water bodies, floodplains, and fish, including ESA-listed fish (Bull Trout) and state special-status species.</p> | | |

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: Because the fencing would be located in upland areas, there would be no effect on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Because the project would not involve ground-disturbing activities, there would be no potential to affect groundwater and aquifers.

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

Explanation: The fencing may result in a limited reduction in some recreational activities at each site by restricting access along established trails and roads; however, it would not result in a major change in the overall land-use patterns at each project site.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Minor landscape changes would occur with the addition of fences; however, constructing them from logs blends them in with the landscape and would reduce the potential for major contrasts with surrounding viewsheds.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance associated with the installation, thus no potential for dust. Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions would likely result from crews using vehicles along existing roads to access each site.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Intermittent noise from using hand tools to install the fencing would occur during daylight hours. These would be relatively low-level noises in the context of each project-area setting.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: Crews would utilize the best management practices to ensure that the fencing installations would be carried out safely.

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: Every project location sits within the boundaries of the Spokane Indian Reservation. Bonneville coordinated with the Spokane Tribe of Indians throughout the planning phase for this project proposal.

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

Signed: /s/ Jeffrey J. Maslow
Jeffrey J. Maslow, ECP-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: March 19, 2019