

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Studies into Factors Limiting the Abundance of Okanogan and Wenatchee Sockeye Salmon

Project No.: 2008-503-00, Contract 73354 REL 42

Project Manager: Victoria Bohlen

Location: Chelan, Grant and Okanogan Counties, 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 study factors limiting production of Okanogan and Wenatchee sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) stocks. CRITFC would subcontract with the Yakama Nation to 1) trap and tag sockeye salmon at Priest Rapids Dam using existing PIT tagging infrastructure, 2) conduct night-time juvenile sockeye salmon acoustic-trawl surveys and limnology surveys in Lake Wenatchee, and 3) collect biosamples from juvenile sockeye and kokanee in Lake Wenatchee. CRITFC would also subcontract with Biomark to maintain an existing PIT tag site at Zosel Dam and collect and summarize the detection data.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills ongoing commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System biological opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp). These proposed activities also fulfill commitments specified in the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp).

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/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel August 10, 2020
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.

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Project Site Description

Project activities are located at the Priest Rapids Dam on the Columbia River in Grant County, approximately 50 miles east of Yakima, Washington (WA); at the Zosel Dam on the Okanogan River in Okanogan County near the boundary of the United States and Canada in Oroville, WA; and in Lake Wenatchee on the Wenatchee River in Chelan County, approximately 20 miles north of Leavenworth, WA.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The actions proposed by this project would not impact historic or cultural resources, or the action would occur at existing infrastructure.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Geology and soils would not be disturbed by the proposed activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ground-disturbing actions planned and there are no anticipated impacts to any plant species, and no ESA-listed species or habitats exist within the immediate area of impact.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The collection and survey activities would not cause anticipated impacts to any wildlife species, and no listed species or habitats exist within the immediate area of impact.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities would involve the direct and indirect take of several listed species (Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout). CRITFC consulted with the National Marine

Fisheries Service (NMFS) for impacts to Chinook and steelhead and US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) for impacts to Bull trout and received the following scientific research permits: NMFS Section 10 Permit No. 1379-7R effective 2017- 2021 and USFWS Section 10 Permit No. TE-227268-4 effective 10/20/19 – 10/19/22.

The activities would not impact or change waterbodies or floodplains.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact or change wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

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

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

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

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact or change visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not impact or change air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise level may be affected during nighttime trawling surveys in Lake Wenatchee, however, work would not result in an increase in ambient noise on the lake.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Safety regulations would be followed as necessary for the proposed activities.

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: No notification - All work would be implemented at existing facilities or on public lands.

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

Signed: /s/ Brenda Aguirre August 10, 2020
Brenda Aguirre date
Environmental Protection Specialist