

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Red River Corrals Conservation Easement Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Project No.: 2002-072-00; BPA-011341

Project Manager: Jennifer Lord

Location: Idaho County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to fund the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) and Idaho Foundation for Parks & Lands (IFPL) to purchase a conservation easement on the Red River Corrals property, a 134-acre parcel of land located approximately 11.5 air miles east-southeast of Elk City, in Idaho County, ID. IFPL would hold title to the conservation easement to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat. BPA would also provide stewardship funds to be used for annual monitoring and defense of the terms and conditions of the conservation easement.

Funding the purchase of the conservation easement and long-term stewardship on the Red River Corrals property would serve as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System which includes dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers. This land acquisition includes high-quality meadow habitat that is used by upland wildlife (specifically elk), as well as a section of Red River, which runs through the upper portion of the easement boundary and supports anadromous salmonids (e.g. spring/summer Chinook salmon and steelhead).

The property consists of riparian, upland, meadow, and riverine habitat. The NPT would develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of habitat and other resources on the property. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may be conducted.

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/ Kelly Hope

Kelly Hope
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
ACS Professional Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 7, 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.

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Project Site Description

Located in the Red River Valley, the property is bounded by the Nez Perce National Forest, with small private parcels along the north and southwest boundaries. The Red River flows through the center of the property. Vegetative cover on the property is approximately 59% meadow/hay, 28% forest and 12% riparian. The topography is generally flat, with increasing slopes at the eastern and southern property boundaries.

Recreational uses include scenic and open space viewing, hiking, cross country skiing, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, camping, and limited access for public hunting. Multiple buildings, including a residence and guest cabins, and associated access roads and well are located on the west side of the property, adjacent to Red River Road. There are no power or transmission lines or engineered roads on the property.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the acquisition, which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement. To the extent that future activities on the property may have an effect, it is expected that the NPT would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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: A public notification letter and map of the property would be mailed to neighboring landowners, stakeholders, and relevant elected officials and other interested parties prior to the property closing. Advertisements would also be placed in local newspapers, and information would be posted on BPA's website.

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

Signed: /s/ Kelly Hope Date: January 7, 2020
Kelly Hope ("Mandy") – EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
ACS Professional Staffing