Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project – North Fork Teanaway Large Wood Trapping Project

Project No.: 1997-015-00

Project Manager: Michelle O'Malley EWU-4

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

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 provide cost-share funding for implementation of the Yakama/Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP) North Fork Teanaway Large Wood Trapping Project (Project) located in the Yakima Basin watershed. BPA funds would contribute about 25 percent of overall project costs. Additional cost-share funding from the Salmon Recovery Board, Yakima Integrated Plan, and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration grant would cover the remaining project costs. In 2019, YKFP completed helicopter wood placement work across RM 4.6 to 6.7. This Project would complement prior wood placement work. The Project would improve floodplain habitat complexity, channel and floodplain connectivity, and riparian habitat for steelhead, Chinook salmon, coho salmon, bull trout, cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, and other fish and amphibian species.

The Project reach is located between river miles (RM) 5.5 and 8.7 on the North Fork Teanaway River. The Project would include the addition of three large wood trapping structures downstream of Jack Creek, 10 wood deflector structures, 15 flow splitter structures, unanchored logs placed loosely across the floodplain to provide roughness, and floodplain recontouring work at a manmade berm located at RM 6.2.

The large wood trapping structures would be engineered to remain stationary while racking additional woody material as it travels downstream. Large wood structures would be vertically piled into the stream banks with minimal stream bank excavation required. Logs would be stabilized with boulders and cobble (excavated from the gravel berm at RM 6.2) and rebar and rope lashing. Each large wood trapping structure would consist of about 50 logs.

Flow deflectors would re-direct flows from areas where the river exerts high erosive forces to a direction that enhances secondary channel formation and wood racking. Flow deflectors would consist of logs placed along the streambanks and anchored with the addition of sediment and rock.

Flow splitters would direct flows toward secondary channels and slow downstream velocities to encourage gravel bar growth. Flow splitters would be installed by excavating about 4 cubic yards of material to place and backfill key logs at a 45 degree angle upstream. Sweeper logs would be

placed on top and anchored with interlocking rootwads and additional sediment and slash placement.

Two staging areas at both ends of the project would be established for equipment storage and refueling. They would be positioned at least 150-feet from the stream banks. Wood and material staging areas would be placed throughout the project area during mobilization. Site access would be from county-owned North Fork Teanaway Road. Temporary access routes would be established throughout the project area, and would be removed, scarified, and the area re-seeded after construction. Two temporary culverted stream crossings have been identified for the project.

Ground disturbance would be limited to the footprint of flow splitters and deflectors. All ground disturbing activities near waterways would occur within the designated in-water work window from July 15th to August 31st. An excavator would be operated from the bank as much as possible. In areas where the excavator may enter the wetted perimeter of the bank, a platform of logs would be used to limit disturbance to native bed materials. If flows are higher than expected, work area isolation and fish exclusion measures would be employed to minimize impacts to migrating fish. After construction, soils would be scarified and topped with slash to minimize erosion potential. Native seed and live stake plantings would be applied on disturbed floodplain surfaces.

Inspection and maintenance of the project site would occur annually, and could result in minor on-site adjustments to wood placements, the addition of woody materials as needed to maintain project success, and additional vegetation plantings and management.

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/ Claire McClory
Claire McClory
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange *July 8, 2020*
Katey Grange 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: North Fork Teanaway Large Wood Trapping Project

Project Site Description

The Project is located within the North Cascades, Chiwaukum Hills and Lowland ecoregion. The Project would occur in the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF), a 50,000-acre piece of public land owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and co-managed with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). The project site is located within a Road and River Corridor identified in the TCF Recreation Plan. It is an area identified for scenic driving, and river restoration that coincides with river access for fishing, swimming, and day use.

The project area is within a section of the North Fork Teanaway that has been historically degraded by and hydrologically altered by logging activities. Over time, the lack of old growth wood inputs, as well as splash dams constructed to move logs downstream have contributed toward substantial alterations to hydrologic processes, including reduced floodplain function and roughness, a weakened riparian corridor, and scour of naturally accumulated fine sediments and cobbles down to the native bedrock. Vegetation is dominated by Douglas fir and ponderosa pine, in addition to some Engelmann spruce, western white pine, western red cedar and grand fir. Riparian and riverine wetland areas within the Teanaway watershed are vegetated by cottonwood forest, scrub shrub thickets, and obligate and facultative wetland species.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA determined that the implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected (WA 2020 026). The Colville Confederated Tribes concurred with BPA's determination on April 16, 2020 and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred on April 20, 2020. No other responses were received from consulting parties.

Notes:

- Thirty meter avoidance buffers would be flagged or marked off with t-posts and high visibility construction fencing around the perimeter of known cultural resources sites prior to project implementation.
- An archaeological monitor would work with field crews to ensure that known sites are avoided during implementation.
- In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribe's cultural staff and cultural committee and DAHP notified.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impacts to soil from increased erosion potential during construction and grading activities. Sediment control BMPs would be installed prior to project implementation to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or excessive runoff during construction. Post construction seeding and mulching would further minimize erosion potential. Some fine sediments and gravels are likely to mobilize downstream during 2-year flood events. However, the project was designed to mobilize sediment to accumulate gravel bars and fill with cobble in areas that have scoured to bedrock.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special status, including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed, plant species are known to be present. Temporary impacts to existing vegetation during grading activities. Post construction seeding and monitoring would re-establish native upland and riparian plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Minor, temporary impacts to local wildlife habitat from noise and vegetation removal expected. ESA-listed species include historic Northern spotted owl (NSO) management circles (a state-designated listing) within the project area that are monitored annually by WDFW staff, with no recent detections. The project is covered under the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with Project Notification Form number 2020077.

Notes:

- Loud equipment use from chainsaws would occur outside of the NSO critical nesting period of March 1st to July 15th. No helicopter use proposed for this undertaking.
- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including construction timing and equipment use restrictions in potential NSO habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project has the potential to provide up to 170 acres of floodplain reconnection to areas that have been historically altered by human influence.

No known state-listed special status species present. ESA-listed fish species include Middle Columbia River steelhead and bull trout The project is covered under the HIP Biological Opinion under Section 7 of ESA with Project Notification Form number 2020077. The project would result in net benefits to fish species within the project reach from increased habitat availability, floodplain access, and decreased summer stream temperatures.

Notes:

- Project sponsors would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including turbidity monitoring requirements and in-water work timing.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: About 1.67 acres of riverine habitat and about 0.71 acres of freshwater emergent or shrub wetlands would be temporarily impacted during construction activities. Equipment access and construction activities would take place during the dry season, and avoidance and minimization measures are identified in the project Sponsor's Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit 27 (NWS-NWS-2020-499) that further reduce impacts. Long term benefits to wetlands and wetland cell development are expected to result from project implementation.

Notes:

- The Project Sponsor would adhere to all wetland avoidance and minimization efforts identified in the Clean Water Act permit issued for this project.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor impacts to groundwater during construction excavation within the floodplain. Long-term increase in floodplain access would benefit groundwater recharge and function.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary impact to recreation users due to access limitations during construction in the immediate project area. The project would align with the WDNR TCF Road and River Corridor recreation designation by enhancing river process and function while maintaining long-term access to fishing and dispersed recreation within the TCF.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor change to visual quality from berm removal and the addition of wood and slash on the floodplain. The project area is not within a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in vehicle emissions and dust during construction. No long-term impacts to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in noise during daytime construction activities due to vehicles and equipment use. No long-term impacts to air quality.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impact expected.

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 Yakama Nation has been working with WDNR to obtain a land use license for conducting the proposed work on WDNR property.

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

Signed: */s/ Claire McClory* *07/08/2020*

Claire McClory, ECF-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist