

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Benton SWCD Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) Willamette River Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E).

Project No.: 2009-012-00

Project Manager: E. Andersen – EWM-4

Location: Polk, OR.

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B3.3 - Research related to conservation of fish and wildlife

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund Benton Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for work on the RM&E of the Willamette Focused Investment Partnership (WFIP) projects located on the Upper and Middle reaches of the Willamette River. This is Phase 4 involving the development of a monitoring plan and water temperature collection. Data collected would provide a basis for characterizing spatial and temporal variability within the waterbody that may reflect restoration activities, flow, weather, hyporheic inputs, and other site conditions.

The proposed actions are the following:

1. Create monitoring plan

- Identify parameters, physical locations and the time period(s) for data collection.

2. Collect water temperature data

Install two water temperature loggers at Bowers Rock State Park and The Nature Conservancy's Confluence Preserve. Cinder blocks would serve as anchors for water temperature monitors when installed with floating buoys

- Maintain the water temperature logger at Collins Bay project site.

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/ Luca T. De Stefanis

Luca T. De Stefanis
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
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/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Date: May 8, 2020

Katey 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.

Proposed Action: Benton SWCD Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) Willamette River Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RM&E)

Project Site Description

All activities would occur at field sites associated with Upper and Middle reaches of the Willamette River Oregon.

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 ground disturbing activities, thus the proposed activities would not have the potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at existing field sites.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbing activities proposed, thus the proposed activities do not have the potential to affect geology and soils. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at existing field sites.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbing or vegetation removal activities proposed. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities and field sites associated with the Willamette River Oregon.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbing or other activity that may affect wildlife or wildlife habitat is proposed. Field crews from 2 people hiking with backpacks would yield avoidance or minor disturbance through human presence of walking through fields and woods.		
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> This project work concentrates on monitoring water temperatures through maintenance and data collection. There would be no physical handling of fish to administer the installation water temperature logger. There would be no impact to adjacent waterbodies or floodplains because no ground disturbing activities are proposed. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at the existing sites.		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No ground disturbing activities are proposed thus the action does not have the potential to impact wetlands. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at the existing sites.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No ground disturbing activities are proposed thus the action does not have the potential to impact wetlands. All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at the existing sites.

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



Explanation: Access to field sites is on existing road networks and all activities are compatible with local land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The proposed action includes operations and maintenance of an existing equipment installation from previous year's sites which has already been installed. The equipment in place at the existing site would not impact visual quality. The action also would include installing equipment at sites where it was not previously installed. Therefore the proposed action would add additional equipment for water temperature monitoring. The only visible portion of the newly-installed equipment would be a buoy at the water surface, which would be a minor change in the visual quality of the area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or at the existing field sites and would have no effect on air quality. Any increase in emissions from vehicles accessing field sites would be very minor and short term.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or the existing field sites and would not result in an increase in ambient noise at field site locations.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: All work would be carried out from within existing facilities or the existing sites. Workers carrying the proposed actions of RM&E activities are trained in proper equipment management techniques. This activity is not considered hazardous nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the general public.

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: The monitoring program leverages research by Portland State University (PSU), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), US Forest Service (USFS), as well as many Willamette River Scientists. All work is at existing facilities and field work at field sites are accessed on existing roads and adjacent public lands or partnering conservation based private lands with signed agreements with landowners already in place.

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

Signed: /s/ Luca T. De Stefanis

Luca T. De Stefanis

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

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Date: May 8, 2020