

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fence Maintenance and LWD Inspections

Project No.: 1998-021-00

Project Manager: Eric Andersen – EWL-4

Location: Hood River County, Oregon

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 fund the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon to implement the Fence Maintenance and LWD Inspections project in Hood River County, Oregon. This project would benefit ESA-listed steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and coho salmon (*O. kisutch*).

Inspect and maintain past project sites: Previously implemented stream habitat improvement projects would be revisited to take annual photo points and resurvey cross sections and longitudinal profiles as needed to document changes. The information would inform current and future design for similar projects. If necessary, instream and floodplain structures such as large wood habitat structures would be maintained. No ground disturbance would occur as part of this action.

Inspect and maintain riparian livestock exclusion fencing: Established riparian exclosures in the Hood River basin would be monitored for damage. Fencing structures would be repaired where posts, wires, or corner sections have failed. Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to minor in-kind fence repairs. No new fence construction or realignment beyond the original project footprint is proposed.

These actions would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System and Bonneville's commitments to the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon under the 2020 Columbia River Fish Accord Extension agreement, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the FCRPS on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 et seq.).

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:

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: Fence Maintenance and LWD Inspections

Project Site Description

The Fence Maintenance and LWD Inspections project is located at previous restoration sites on private property within the Hood River watershed in Hood River County, Oregon.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All former restoration project sites have been surveyed, consulted on, and received clearance to proceed by BPA archaeologists in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The actions described above would have no potential to affect cultural resources due to the limited ground disturbance.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground-disturbing activities would be limited to minor fence repairs.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ESA-listed or sensitive plant species present in the project area. Short-term negative impacts to vegetation may occur from walking fence lines and replacing fence infrastructure. In the long term, fence maintenance would result in restored or improved vegetative conditions.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Hood River County has the potential to contain ESA-listed northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) and critical habitat (USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), 2021), but suitable habitat is not located within or near the project sites. There would be no effect to other sensitive wildlife species. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed by inspection and repair activities; however, displacement would be short term.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There is no in-water work planned and the activities would not impact water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands would not be impacted by the proposed activities.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The inspection and repair activities would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no known special uses for the property. Existing land use would not change as a result of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minimal impact to visual quality during inspections and repairs, but this would be very short term.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Equipment emissions from travel to project sites would result in short-term impacts to air quality. These would be temporary and localized in nature and would not have long-term impacts on air quality. Implementation of the proposed action is not expected to generate long-term or short-term violations of state air quality standards.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Fence replacement may result in temporary, localized noise increases. These increases would not substantially impact the surrounding environment.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety standards would be followed.

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: This project has been developed with guidance and permission of the landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Israel Duran November 5, 2021
Israel Duran, ECF-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT