

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Genetic Assessment of Columbia River Stocks

Project No.: 2008-907-00

Project Manager: Brady Allen- EWU-4

Location: Gooding County, Idaho and Benton, Columbia, Klickitat 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 Fisheries Commission to carry out four inter-related projects that address Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) Discovery, Genetic Baseline Expansion, Genetic Stock ID (GSI) to Evaluate Catch, and GSI of salmonids passing Bonneville Dam. The four projects are highly related since SNP markers are needed to complete species-specific baselines, and these baselines are requisite to complete GSI. This project does not handle fish directly, it does handle the genetic samples for analysis.

The specific objectives are:

- 1) Discover and evaluate SNP markers in salmon and steelhead
- 2) Expand and create genetic baselines for multiple species (Chinook, steelhead, sockeye, and coho)
- 3) Implement GSI programs for mainstem Chinook fisheries
- 4) GSI of steelhead and Chinook passing Bonneville Dam
- 5) Evaluate genetic variation in white sturgeon in the mainstem Columbia River

These projects would work closely with an existing BPA-funded project (2010-031-00) to ensure that future genetic marker sets used in the Columbia River basin are standardized, providing genetic tools for managing wild and hatchery stocks in the basin with GSI techniques segregating adult wild runs by stock of origin, and Parentage Based Tagging technologies identifying the stock and age of sampled hatchery fish.

Personnel may assist in the preparation of tissue samples collected at Bonneville Dam, which would be transported to the Hagerman Genetics Laboratory where the samples would be sequenced and assayed for genetic information such as genotype, allele frequency, and SNP markers with the information added to the appropriate database. This data would be analyzed to distinguish specific stocks, determine genetic diversity, stock specific run timing, and estimating stock composition and reported back to the fisheries for management and harvest planning purposes.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills 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), and Bonneville's commitments to the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission 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:

- 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/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
CorSource

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange March 28, 2022

Katey C. 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: Genetic Assessment of Columbia River Stocks

Project Site Description

The genetics laboratory is located at the Hagerman Genetics Laboratory at the Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station in Gooding County, Idaho. Genetics are collected at various collection sites in the Columbia River Basin.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed activities would occur within the confines of the existing structures, and would not require any ground-disturbing activities for the completion of this work.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed activities would occur within the confines of the existing structures, and would not require any ground-disturbing activities for the completion of this work.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work is within existing facilities; no habitat present. There are no anticipated impacts to any plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work is implemented within existing facilities; no species or habitat present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur in existing facilities, and would not require any ground-disturbing activities for the completion of the work. All genetic samples are provided by other programs and no fish are handled under this contract.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur in existing facilities and wetlands would not be impacted.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur in existing facilities, no ground excavation is planned, and no groundwater would be disturbed.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur at existing facilities and would not impact or change land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur at existing facilities, and would not impact visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur at existing facilities and would not impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur at existing facilities and would not impact aural quality.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All safety regulations would be followed as necessary.

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: Personnel may prepare samples collected from Bonneville Dam which is managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The samples would be analyzed by the Hagerman Genetics Laboratory at the Hagerman Fish Culture Experiment Station, which is owned and managed by Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and the University of Idaho. No additional coordination is needed.

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

Israel Duran, ECF-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
CorSource

March 28, 2022

Date