

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** SF Manashtash, Frost Meadows Wood Replenishment Project (*update to the Categorical Exclusion published on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022*)

**Project No.:** 1997-051-00

**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 fund the Yakama Nation (YN) to place large wood on the South Fork (SF) Manashtash Creek and Frost Meadows floodplain in Kittitas County in Washington. The proposed project would include the placement of large wood across the floodplain to create roughness and initiate the collection of finer sediments to raise elevations and produce a multi-channeled river system. Adding roughness would also produce habitat complexity by forcing pools, off channel habitat, and improved hyporheic flow. This CX has been updated to reflect the addition of a gate relocation to the project scope.

YN would install unanchored wood in the creek and on the adjacent floodplain surfaces along approximately 0.8 RMs. YN would utilize native trees harvested from overstocked, adjacent upland forests following a silvicultural prescription for forest health and wildlife habitat. All the proposed treated reaches would be areas that are deficient in woody material and areas where replenishing woody material would have abundant opportunities to catch on meandering bends, trees, and brush during high flows.

Approximately 50 trees would be cut within a thinning unit identified by the landowners' forester. Trees would be hauled near final placement site using a compact utility tractor and final placement within the stream would occur using grip hoists (ground source hand-operated cable). Approximately 250 cubic yards of slash would be harvested onsite through pre-commercial thinning activities. Slash would be transported by hand to the extent possible, with the compact utility tractor being used when applicable. All tractor activities would occur in the dry and any vegetation damage from its use would be revegetated upon project completion.

YN would remove a gate located by an abandoned, non-functioning bridge, and would re-install it closer to the main roadway. The gate's purpose would be to deter vehicular travel into the floodplain while also maintaining pedestrian access for public use. The gate would be comprised of two metal posts and metal swing beam crossing the two-track road. It would be placed on an unnamed, two-track road leading up to the project area and floodplain. A tractor would be used to remove the posts to create minimal ground disturbance, then a small backhoe attachment would be used to re-install the gate by digging 3-feet deep by 2-feet wide holes for the two posts in the

new location. The new location would allow enough room for the public to park near the gate without being able to drive into the floodplain.

Funding the proposed actions would support Bonneville's commitments to the Yakama Nation 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/ Catherine Clark

Catherine Clark

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

August 17, 2022

Date

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:** SF Manashtash, Frost Meadows Wood Replenishment Project (*update to the Categorical Exclusion published on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022*)

## **Project Site Description**

The project would take place on SF Manashtash Creek at Frost Meadows. The project reach is located the portion of the LT Murray Wildlife Area managed by WDFW, Township 18N, Range 15E, and Section 17. Together, the entire L.T. Murray Complex covers roughly 110,000 acres, with approximately 30,000 acres managed by Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The remaining 80,000 acres is managed by WDFW. The L.T. Murray Complex is primarily made up of rangeland and critical winter range for deer and elk.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA Archaeologist conducted National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultations with the Washington (WA) State Historic Preservation Office (DAHP), WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN), and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CCT). BPA determined that the implementation would result in No Historic Properties Affected, pending all construction be conducted under the guidance of the inadvertent discovery plan (WA 2020 048). BPA received a response on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> 2021 from DAHP concurring with BPA's determination; no other responses were received.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed or special-status plant species are known to exist on the site. YN would work with a WDFW silviculturist for all wood harvest activities. Areas that are disturbed would be revegetated with native plant species.

### **3. Plants**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The placement of large wood and woody debris by heavy equipment would temporarily disturb soils on the project site. Gate removal and installation would have disturb approximately 0.7 cubic yards of soil along an existing two-track road. All ground disturbance would be stabilized with native seeding and planting post-construction. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats).

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status or ESA-listed wildlife species or habitat would be negatively impacted by the wood harvest or placement. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed and displaced by construction noise and human presence during implementation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project work would occur above the extent of anadromy for ESA-listed species, therefore no potential to effect ESA-listed species. Implementation would occur during lower flows or in the dry in summer months; therefore, no impact to non-ESA-listed fish species or to the waterbody would occur. In the long term, this project was designed to increase habitat fish complexity.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands located in the project area.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground-disturbing activities are not likely to intersect with groundwater and would have no impact on aquifers. Construction BMPs would be implemented to prevent contamination of groundwater from equipment leaks or spills.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: This project is located on WDFW-managed property. Pedestrian public access for the project area would remain, therefore no changes to land use would occur.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor changes to visual quality. The gate relocation would remain within the project area and therefore would be visually consistent with the original project area. The new wood placements would be visually consistent with adjacent vegetation and topography of the proposed wood placement and would not be located in a visually sensitive area.

#### **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in emissions and dust from vehicles accessing the site during construction activities.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increase in ambient noise during construction. Any noise emitted from construction equipment would be short term and temporary during daylight hours and would cease following project completion.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed activities are not considered hazardous nor would result in any health and 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: 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: WDFW is the land manager. YN has been in coordination with WDFW for implementation of this proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Catherine Clark August 17, 2022  
Catherine Clark, ECF-4 Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist