

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: YTAHP Wenas Creek Fish Screen RM 8.0 Project

Project No.: 2007-398-00

Project Manager: Michelle O'Malley, EWU-4

Location: Yakima 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 North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD), through the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP), to install a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries Service compliant fish screen on the end of an existing irrigation pump intake on private land near Naches, Washington. Wenas Creek is utilized by Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead, Chinook, and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes. ESA-listed bull trout are present in the Yakima River and may utilize the lower reaches of Wenas Creek for overwintering habitat.

NYCD would install the fish screen on the existing intake in Wenas Creek at River Mile (RM) 8.0 to prevent fish entrainment in the irrigation canal. The fish screen would be placed by hand on the pump intake and in the dry (no in-water work); there would be no disturbance to the creek bed or bank. NYCD would implement the activity in the spring of 2024.

Funding the proposed activities would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System Biological Opinions, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the development and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the 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.

Brenda Aguirre
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. 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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on Wenas Creek at RM 8.0 within the Wenas Creek Watershed of the Upper Yakima River Subbasin. Wenas Creek is a tributary to the Yakima River at RM 122. The legal description of the project site is T14N, R18E, Sec 10. The surrounding area is used for agricultural crop production and grazing.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA determined implementation of the proposed activity would have no potential to cause effects on April 29, 2024.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of soil disturbance while accessing and leaving the work site; there would be no long-term impacts to existing soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status species present. The project would have short-term effects on vegetation due to human trampling of some vegetation while working at and accessing the work site; there would be no long-term impacts to the existing vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status species or designated habitat present. Some disturbance to non-listed or sensitive wildlife during project activities may occur due to human presence. Any impacts would be short term.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and their designated critical habitat are present in the project area. ESA-listed bull trout (*Salvelinus*

confluentus) are present in the Yakima River and may utilize the lower reaches of Wenas Creek for overwintering habitat. Sponsor would utilize Best Management Practices to avoid and minimize impacts to fish during project implementation (the fish screen would be placed by hand on the pump intake hose in the dry; no in-water work). Some disturbance to non-listed fish during project activities may occur due to removal and replacement of the pump intake hose from the creek. Any impacts would be short term and the overall impact would be beneficial to all fish species. Project activities are not expected to impact waterbodies or floodplains.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose new wells or use of groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose changes to land use; designated farmlands would not be taken out of production.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose changes to visual quality; the pump intake screen would be visually consistent with agricultural irrigation infrastructure.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions while accessing and leaving the work site.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be short-term implementation noise during daylight hours while vehicles access and leave the work site. This noise would not be noticeably different from the surrounding agricultural production noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project does not involve the use of hazardous materials or propose work in areas of known soil contamination.

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: Installation of the fish screen would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor, NYCD, has coordinated with the underlying landowner and has permission to conduct project activities.

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

Signed:

Brenda Aguirre, ECF-4
Environmental Protection Specialist