

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Prosser Dam Pacific Lamprey Passage and Monitoring Equipment Upgrade

Project No.: 2017-005-00

Project Manager: Elizabeth Santana, EWM-4

Location: Benton 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 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to improve adult Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*) passage and to upgrade monitoring equipment at Prosser Dam on the Yakima River in Prosser, Benton County, Washington. The current lamprey passage structures on the center and right ladders terminate into trap boxes that require frequent monitoring and maintenance, and staff must manually transport collected lamprey upstream. In addition, existing motion detection video cameras used to count migrating lamprey at the left, center, and right ladders are inefficient and at times inaccurate. Modifying the lamprey passage structures and upgrading monitoring equipment would eliminate the need for staff to handle and transport lamprey, improve counting efficiency and accuracy, and reduce overall lamprey stress. Funding supports ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the main stem 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.).

The existing lamprey passage systems on the center and right ladders would be converted to volitional passage systems by adding 4-inch-diameter flexible PVC hose or solid PVC pipe outfalls, so lamprey can easily exit. A perforated screen would also be installed in the bottom of the trap boxes to allow fine sediment to settle out underneath, reducing lamprey exposure to fine sediment. Laser photoelectric sensor monitoring systems would be installed at all three ladders to count adult lamprey passing through the PVC counting stations at all three ladders. The new volitional passage system and monitoring equipment would be mounted to the existing concrete fish ladders, and no ground disturbance would be required.

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.

Walker Stinnette
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 USBR property at Prosser Dam on the Yakima River in Prosser, Benton County, Washington (Township 8 North, Range 24 East, Section 2). Work would occur on the existing lamprey passage structures located at the left, center, and right fish ladders, where new components of the volitional passage system and monitoring equipment would be mounted to the existing concrete structures. Limited in-water work would be required in areas where other fish species do not have access. No vegetation, wildlife habitat, or wetlands are present.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not require any modifications to existing structures or ground disturbance that could affect historic or cultural resources. Therefore, BPA determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this project is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not require any ground disturbance. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not require any ground disturbance, and no vegetation is present. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species or habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from increased human presence and the use of hand tools to install the volitional passage system and monitoring equipment. Any wildlife that could be present in the project area would likely be habituated to this level of disturbance given the current routine activities at the project site. No special-status wildlife species or habitats are documented near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status wildlife species or habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Yakima River supports Middle Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), which are listed as Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Yakima River is designated critical habitat for both species. The proposed action would require limited in-water work in the existing lamprey passage structures where other fish species are not present. The proposed action would not impact water quality or quantity and is intended to reduce stress on migrating lamprey. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on water bodies, floodplains, or federally-listed fish species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not require any ground disturbance, and no wetlands are present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not require any ground disturbance, and no extraction of groundwater or aquifers is proposed. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not result in a change in land use, and the project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the project site.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not result in substantial emissions that would impact air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from increased human presence and the use of hand tools to install the new volitional passage system and monitoring equipment. There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout implementation of the proposed action to minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human health and safety.

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: The proposed action would occur on property owned and managed by USBR. No additional landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed:

Walker Stinnette
Environmental Protection Specialist