

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Coleman Creek at CID Fish Passage and Screening Project

Project No.: 2007-398-00

Project Manager: Jennifer Lord, 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 Kittitas County Conservation District (KCCD) of the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP) work group to implement the Coleman Creek at Cascade Irrigation District (CID) Fish Passage and Screening Project on privately owned land in Kittitas County, Washington. BPA's proposed funding for this project would fulfill ongoing commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp). It would also assist BPA in mitigating 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, under the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act)(16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 et seq.).

Under current conditions at the proposed project site, Coleman Creek and CID's canal intersect, and natural stream flow and irrigation water co-mingle. Coleman Creek is routed under the canal through a corrugated metal pipe (CMP), resulting in a passage barrier for all fish including Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Mid-Columbia River steelhead, as well as Chinook and coho salmon. Additionally, CID diverts water from Coleman Creek for irrigation, and the diversion is unscreened, putting fish and other aquatic species at direct risk of entrainment and mortality.

The proposed project would reverse the current configuration and route the canal under the stream, allowing Coleman Creek to be daylighted and the streambed restored for fish passage. The irrigation diversion would be screened in accordance with the National Marine Fisheries Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife fish screening criteria. The project elements include: 1) removing the existing irrigation diversion structure and CMP under the canal; 2) installing the new canal pipe; 3) restoring the streambed; 4) installing a new diversion structure with a flat plate fish screen, brush trolley cleaning system and a concrete fishway; 5) installing large woody debris (LWD) along sections of the restored stream channel, and 6) installing a bridge along the canal road.

To facilitate this work, two access routes on existing roads and three staging locations would be used. The access road along the canal would be graded and improved to facilitate access to the project area. To facilitate installing the canal under the streambed, up to 15 feet of digging would occur to accommodate the pipe, bedding, and stream scour. The streambed would be restored

with a 440-foot-long roughened channel. Approximately 30 pieces of large wood with and without root wads would be buried and placed along 120 and 60 feet of left and right restored stream banks, respectively, below the canal bridge to create fish habitat and protect the reconstructed stream banks and promote establishment of riparian vegetation. The concrete fishway would be constructed by digging up to 10 feet deep to accommodate the fishway, footings and cutoff walls. Finally, about 145 feet of 14-inch-diameter pipeline and 30-inch-diameter pipeline would be installed for delivering water from the diversion into the canal. To facilitate access, a 60-foot-long by 10-foot-wide bridge would be installed on the CID canal road. All disturbed areas would be revegetated. The overall disturbance area would encompass about 4 acres consisting of mostly grass, shrubs, and trees (mostly non-native or invasive species) and existing roadways. KCCD would implement the project during the fall and winter of 2025.

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 in the Upper Yakima River Basin in central Washington. Coleman Creek is a tributary in the Wilson-Naneum Subbasin in the Kittitas Valley. The project site is 6 miles from the Yakima River at River Mile 147. The surrounding area is used for agricultural crop production and livestock grazing. The surrounding vegetation consists of a mix of native and non-native riparian area trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses.

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 State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation (YN). BPA made a determination of no adverse effect to historic properties on September 10, 2024. A response from DAHP was received on September 16, 2024, concurring with BPA's determination. No response was received from the YN within the 30-day determination consultation period ending October 10, 2024.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would disturb instream and riparian soils during construction activities. BPA's HIP general and activity-specific conservation measures for erosion control would be followed during project implementation.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would remove or disturb about one acre of vegetation during construction activities. All disturbed areas would be revegetated following construction. Federal/state special-status plant species and habitats are not present in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would temporarily disturb/displace area wildlife due to increased noise and vehicle traffic, operation of heavy equipment, and human presence during project implementation. Wildlife would likely avoid the area during this time and return once the

project work is complete. Federal/state special-status wildlife species and habitats are not present in the project areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Coleman Creek would be placed in a stream bypass during construction, allowing work to occur in isolation from flowing water during the state approved in-water work window to minimize impacts to aquatic life and water quality. The project may generate turbidity and remove and add sediments and soils while working in Coleman Creek. KCCD would follow all terms and conditions in their Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit and 401 Water Quality Certification coverage under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 27 for aquatic habitat restoration activities.

There would be no net rise in floodplain elevations.

The project would have an effect on fish and their habitats during in-water work activities. The project would subject fish to short-term elevated noise and turbidity and disturb approximately 0.2 acres of stream habitat. ESA-listed Middle Columbia River steelhead and their designated critical habitat are present in the project area. The general and activity-specific conservation measures from BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) biological opinion from NMFS would be followed during project implementation to avoid and minimize impacts to fish. The proposed actions would aid in reestablishing fish passage, preventing fish entrainment, and improving fish habitat and development of riparian vegetation.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose new wells or the use of groundwater; spill prevention measures would be followed during use of heavy equipment.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activities do not propose changes to land use; designated farmlands would not be taken out of production and irrigation deliveries would not change.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new canal piping, diversion, fishway, bridge, and stream channel would not be noticeably different than the existing irrigation infrastructure and stream channel; removed riparian vegetation would be replanted.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would generate small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be short-term construction noise during daylight hours. Construction noise would not be noticeably different than the agricultural production noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project sponsor is required to use best management practices to protect worker health and safety. Any activities involving hazardous materials would be disposed of at a designated hazardous waste facility.

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: Implementation of project activities would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor has coordinated with the underlying landowner and irrigation water users 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
Environmental Protection Specialist