

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Maltais Roughened Channel

Project No.: 2010-001-00

Project Manager: Tori Bohlen, EWU-4

Location: Okanogan County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to remove an existing push-up dam that is used to divert water into an irrigation ditch, which is a fish passage barrier. This diversion is located on Frazier Creek, a tributary to the Methow River and is compliant with current Washington State and federal criteria for fish passage and would not be altered by the proposed project. Once the existing push-up dam is removed, WDFW would construct a channel-spanning roughened channel (50 feet long by 10 feet wide) built at a 7.5% grade. The roughened channel would be constructed using imported rounded boulders, cobbles and streambed sediment sourced from within the Methow watershed. The roughened channel requires 40 imported boulders, along with approximately 10 cubic yards (cy) of imported streambed sediment and 10 cy of cobbles. The boulders would be placed at the direction of the engineer or representative, followed by the smaller size classes. Streambed sediment would be washed into the roughened channel to reduce the likelihood of subsurface flows after flow is returned to the channel.

These actions would support the conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on the operations and maintenance of the Columbia River System and BPA'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 Federal Columbia River Power System 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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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.¹

Ted Gresh
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

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: Maltais Roughened Channel

Project Site Description

The Maltais Roughened Channel project site is located approximately 10 miles north of the town of Twisp, WA. The surrounding area is primarily comprised of residential and agricultural land uses.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA made a determination of no adverse effect to historic properties on May 15, 2024 (WA 2023 071). BPA consulted with the Confederated Tribes of Colville Reservation, U.S. Forest Service, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP). BPA did not receive comments from any of the consulting parties within 30 days.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary displacement and compaction impacts to soil from the operation of heavy equipment needed for this action, and an increased erosion potential during construction activities. An Erosion and Pollution Control Plan would be implemented to minimize potential for in-stream turbidity or excessive runoff during construction. A Site Reclamation and Restoration Plan would require all disturbed surfaces be restored by scraping compacted soils and seeding using native grasses.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ESA-listed or special status plant species known to exist on the site. Areas disturbed because of the excavation and access would be seeded with a locally derived and adapted native seed mixture. Any temporary impacts to on-site vegetation that may result from the implementation of this project would be restored to diverse, native vegetative communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no ESA-listed or special-status wildlife species, including sensitive wildlife species, documented in or adjacent to the project area and no designated critical habitat is present. Non-listed resident wildlife species would be temporarily disturbed by noise and

human presence during construction; however, this disturbance would be limited and would not permanently displace wildlife. These effects would be mild, temporary, and localized to the project area. Site revegetation efforts would improve wildlife habitat in the long term, although the riparian zone and channel are likely too narrow to be a properly functioning habitat in either case.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: ESA-listed fish in proximity to the project area include Upper Columbia River spring Chinook and Upper Columbia River steelhead. The project was reviewed and consulted on under the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) Biological Opinion under Section 7 of the ESA. The project sponsor would adhere to all applicable site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP consultation and approval, including turbidity monitoring requirements and in-water work timing. There would be long-term benefits to restoring the project area to a more natural condition and restoring habitat for local fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new roughened channel is not expected to alter groundwater flow patterns.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would utilize existing roads for access and not fundamentally change current land-use patterns in the project area. The amount of water diverted would remain the same and the project would not impact existing agricultural activities.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is not in a visually sensitive area and the rock and boulders used to create the roughened channel would be visually consistent with the existing conditions in Frazier Creek.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A temporary increase in emissions and dust from vehicles during construction actions on the project site would be minor and short-term during construction period but would return to normal conditions once the project is completed.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would result in a temporary increase in ambient noise. 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 work is not considered hazardous, nor does it result in any health or safety risks to the public. All personnel would use best management practices to protect workers' health and safety during construction actions.

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 has an agreement in place with the private landowner to access the property to perform the proposed work

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

Signed:

Ted Gresh
Environmental Protection Specialist