

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Nimz Ranch Greenhouse Construction

Project No.: 2002-011-00

Project Manager: Elizabeth Santana, ECF-4

Location: Boundary County, ID

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.15 Support buildings

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) to construct a greenhouse (engineered structure) that would be 30 feet wide x 54 feet long (1,620 sq. feet). The structure would be 10 feet high and have 8 clear polycarbonate sides. The greenhouse would be used for propagation of native shrubs, trees, and forbs that would be used for restoration in wildlife areas and riparian areas. The greenhouse would be primarily used for early-season propagation, but would have the potential for year-round use.

This project would support conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the operation and maintenance of the Columbia River System. This project would also support 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 1021.102 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; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures* (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

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 the interim final rule to revise DOE NEPA regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 and NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Evaluation

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: Nimz Ranch Greenhouse Construction

Project Site Description

The greenhouse would be constructed at KTOI's existing Nimz Ranch nursery facility, adjacent to the Kootenai River. There are several other farm-type buildings at this location, and the greenhouse would be placed in an area that is currently maintained as grass.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Because the project would have minimal ground disturbance in a previously disturbed leveled and graded area that has an adjacent road and nursery infrastructure, and two previous investigations did not identify any cultural resources in this area, BPA has determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that has no 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 could cause ground disturbance on previously disturbed ground. Standard construction best management practices (BMPs) would be used for sediment control. Therefore, there would be minimal impact on soil and no impact on geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The greenhouse would be constructed in a grassy area. Minor vegetation effects would occur from clearing a 1,500-square-foot area where the greenhouse would be located. No ESA-listed or sensitive plant species are located within the clearing area.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: All work would occur within a previously disturbed area that has an adjacent road and nursery infrastructure. Construction noise would cause a temporary displacement of wildlife if they were in the area. Because of the daily presence of human activity, wildlife are not known to occur in and around the existing buildings. Overall, the proposed actions would have minimal impact on wildlife. There would be no effect on ESA-listed or sensitive wildlife species as none are located within the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no waterbodies present within the project site. The Kootenai River is located approximately 500 feet north of the project site and is outside the project's footprint. Standard construction BMPs would prevent inadvertent leaks (i.e., fuel) from reaching the lake. Therefore, there would be no impact to water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

Plants grown in the greenhouse would be utilized in KTOI's large scale revegetation efforts along the Kootenai River that would benefit aquatic resources, including ESA-list Kootenai white sturgeon and bull trout.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no wetlands present within the project site and, therefore, they would not be impacted by the proposed project.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Ground disturbance would not reach groundwater depth and no changes to wells or aquifers are proposed. Therefore, the proposed actions would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The greenhouse would be located on land owned by the KTOI and would be consistent with the other farm-type buildings already onsite. No changes to the existing land use or specially designated areas are proposed.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Minor changes to visual quality would occur due to placement of the greenhouse; they would be consistent with the other farm-type structures already onsite. Therefore, the proposed action would have minimal impact on visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during the clearing of the ground; however, there would be no substantial changes to air quality due to the proposed actions.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Noise from equipment used to install the greenhouse would temporarily and sporadically increase noise above current ambient conditions; however, no long-term impacts from noise are expected.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No or No with Condition

Explanation: KTOI would adhere to all safety requirements. Therefore, the proposed project would not 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: KTOI owns the property where the greenhouse would be placed.

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