

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** YTAHP Wenas Creek RM 11 Calvert-Turner Fish Screen Installations

**Project No.:** 2007-398-00

**Project Manager:** Daniel Newberry, EWU-4

**Location:** Yakima County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 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 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to modify irrigation withdrawal equipment in Yakima County, Washington. Wenas Creek is utilized by Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed steelhead, Chinook and coho salmon, and a suite of resident fishes. Wenas Creek is also a tributary to the Yakima River where ESA-listed bull trout are present and may utilize the lower reaches of Wenas Creek for overwintering habitat.

NYCD would install the WDFW and NMFS-compliant fish screens on the existing intakes in Wenas Creek at River Mile (RM) 11 to prevent fish entrainment in the irrigation canals. The fish screens (self-cleaning suction screens) would be placed by hand, using hand tools, on the pump intake hoses in the dry (no in-water work); there would be no disturbance to the creek bed or bank. The pump intakes consist of flexible hose that is draped over the streambank during irrigation and removed during the non-irrigation season.

As a part of the project, NYCD would install a 3- by 3- by 1-foot concrete pumping pad on the left bank to anchor the pump which currently sits on bear ground, as well as a new post for the electrical panel serving the intake pump, near the concrete pad, and remove the existing post. Additionally, a new power pole would be installed by Pacific Power approximately 10 feet away from the creek at a depth of 8 feet, to improve service to the electrical panel.

Construction access would be on existing farm roads. A staging area would not be required during construction. A mini excavator would be used to dig or auger a hole for the electrical panel post and possibly move some topsoil for the concrete pad. Pacific Power would bring a specialized truck with an auger to drill a hole for the new power pole. Displaced soil would be spread out and leveled on site using the mini excavator. All other work would be done using hand tools.

Funding the proposed activities fulfills commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp) and the 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 USFWS CRS BiOp). These actions also support 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. 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 the current *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures*, 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.

Brenda Aguirre  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# 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: YTAHP Wenas Creek RM 11 Calvet-Turner Fish Screen Installations**

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located on Wenas Creek at RM 11 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 T15N, R17E, Sec 24. The surrounding area is used for agricultural crop production.

## **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 consultation 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 January 28, 2026. A response from DAHP was received on January 28, 2026, concurring with BPA's determination. No response was received from the YN within the 30-day determination consultation period ending February 27, 2026.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary impacts to soil due to displacement and compaction of soil from the operation of a mini excavator to dig or auger a hole for the electrical panel post and possibly to move some topsoil for the concrete pad and Pacific Power's specialized truck to drill a hole for the new power pole. These actions would occur in an existing agricultural field that has been previously plowed, tilled, and traveled on by heavy farm equipment so impacts would be minor. Construction and access would disturb less than 0.1 acre. Impacts from construction and access would be minimized by the application of best management practices to control erosion.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status plant species are present. Some disturbance to non-listed or sensitive vegetation may occur during project activities due to human trampling, displacement of soil, and equipment accessing the work sites. Any impact would be short term.

### **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 impact 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 by preventing fish entrainment in the irrigation canals. Project activities are not expected to impact water bodies 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 farmland would not be taken out of production and irrigation withdrawal quantities would remain the same.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project activity does not propose substantial changes to visual quality; the pump intake screens, pumping pad, electrical panel post, and power pole 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 project 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 screens, pumping pad, electrical panel post, and power pole would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor, NYCD, has coordinated with the underlying landowner and irrigators 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