

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Umatilla Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance

**Project No.:** 1983-436-00

**Project Manager:** Corrie Veenstra, EWL - 4

**Location:** Umatilla County, Oregon

**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) is proposing to continue funding the Westland Irrigation District (WID) for ongoing fish passage operations and maintenance (O&M) activities at fishway and irrigation diversion facilities in the Umatilla River Basin. WID would perform ongoing O&M tasks at the Stanfield, Feed Canal, Westland, Maxwell, and Three Mile diversions, fish ladders, and fish screens. The goal of the O&M activities is to increase survival of migrating salmonids, including bull trout, in the Umatilla River.

BPA's proposed funding of the O&M activities would fulfill ongoing commitments under the 2020 National Marine Fisheries Service Columbia River System Biological Opinion (2020 NMFS CRS BiOp) and 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service CFS BiOp (2020 FWS CRS BiOp), while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the 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 O&M activities would include routine tasks that occur on a daily, weekly, annual and as needed basis (e.g., checking equipment, cleaning trash racks, etc.). The routine tasks would be carried out on the existing infrastructure to maintain designed operation. Gravel/cobble moved during routine O&M tasks would be either shifted in the channel or placed downstream below ordinary high water at sites, left in stream, or staged adjacent to the facility. No gravel/cobble from outside of the river channel would be removed or manipulated and no ground disturbance outside of the river channel would occur. Work areas would be accessed via existing access roads. In-stream work would occur within the in-water work window.

**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.

/s/ Brenda Aguirre

Brenda Aguirre

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange                      November 18, 2020

Katey C. Grange

Date

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.

**Proposed Action:** Umatilla Fish Passage Operations and Maintenance

## **Project Site Description**

All activities would occur at existing fishway and irrigation diversion facilities located within the Umatilla River Basin in Umatilla County, Oregon. The Umatilla River is a tributary to the Columbia River. The Umatilla River enters the Columbia in northeastern Umatilla, Oregon. Below is a list of the project sites and their Township, Range, and Section.

Stanfield Diversion fish screen and ladder	T3N, R30E, SEC31
Feed Canal Diversion fish screen and ladder	T3N, R29E, SEC22
Westland Diversion fish screen and ladder	T3N, R29E, SEC21
Maxwell Diversion fish screen and ladder	T4N, R28E, SEC28
Three Mile Diversion left & right fish screens & ladders	T5N, R28E, SEC28

The project sites are surrounded by lands used for agricultural crop production and grazing, and rural residential. Vegetation at the sites consists of native and non-native riparian trees, shrubs, and forbs.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA Archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these types of activities constitute routine operations and maintenance activities covered under an existing Section 106 consultation (SHPO Case No. 15-0342). OR SHPO concurrence on no adverse effect dated April 9, 2015. Umatilla Tribe consulted; no response within 30 days.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would remove accumulations of gravel and debris at existing passage facilities. No gravel/cobble from outside of the river channel would be removed or manipulated and no ground disturbance outside of the river channel would occur.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would have a small effect on plants due to equipment crushing some plants while accessing work areas via previously-established trails and pathways. Operations and maintenance activities would be implemented within designated, previously disturbed areas or within the stream channel. Federal/state special-status plant species and habitats are not present in the project areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary disturbance associated with increased vehicle traffic, operation of heavy equipment, and human presence during implementation of operations and maintenance actions.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: O&M activities that entail debris removal or gravel/cobble movement would generate turbidity while removing accumulated materials at the work sites and have a temporary effect on water bodies. Routine O&M actions would be completed in accordance with general and site-specific conservation measures identified in the HIP conservation measures (PMF 2020109) e.g. in-stream work would have sediment containment measures in place and follow ODFW instream work window. Project sponsor is required to obtain any applicable CWA permits and authorizations, as needed.

There would be no net rise in floodplain elevations.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish species (steelhead and bull trout) and their designated critical habitats are present in the project areas. Effects of the ongoing O&M activities on these ESA-listed species and their designated habitat are addressed in the programmatic biological opinions issued by the USFWS May 15, 2020 and NMFS May 7, 2020 on the effects of Bonneville's HIP.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the project sites, therefore no impact to wetlands.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The activities would not impact groundwater or aquifers. There are no new wells or use of ground water proposed, and spill prevention measures would be present on site during use of heavy equipment.

#### **8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes to land use or specially-designated areas. All work would occur at existing fishway and irrigation diversion facilities.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes to visual quality. All work would occur at existing fishway and irrigation diversion facilities and would not change the visual character of the areas.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with increased vehicle traffic and equipment operation during implementation of operations and maintenance actions.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, intermittent noise during implementation of operations and maintenance actions.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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 operations and maintenance activities would not cause impacts to surrounding landowners. The project sponsor has coordinated with the underlying land owners and has permission to conduct ongoing O&M activities.

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

Signed: /s/ Brenda Aguirre November 18, 2020  
Brenda Aguirre Date  
Environmental Protection Specialist