

memorandum

DATE: October 8, 2009

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: J. Baugher
Project Manager – KEWL-4

Proposed Action: Gray's River Chum Supplementation Program

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 2008-710-00

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Small-scale activities undertaken to protect, restore, or improve fish and wildlife habitat, fish passage facilities (such as fish ladders or minor diversion channels), or fisheries.

Location: Grays River, Pacific County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Description of the Proposed Action: Chum salmon in the Grays River have been identified as a primary population targeted to improve to a level that contributes to recovery of the species (LCFRB 2004). The Grays River population is one of only two remaining substantial populations (recent natural origin returns greater than 1,000 adults) utilizing the lower Columbia River and its tributaries. An artificial, spring-fed spawning channel was constructed in 1985 next to Gorley Creek to provide protected off-channel spawning habitat. In 1998, WDFW initiated a chum salmon supplementation program using native stock on the Grays River. This program continued through 2007, but is currently unfunded. This supplementation effort was initiated because it was believed that most successful natural spawning was limited to the spring-fed areas in Gorley and Crazy Johnson creeks. The creeks were believed to have a high risk of failure due to flooding and potential re-alignment of the mainstem Grays River. In December of 1998, a freshet caused a major avulsion through a man-made dike that had protected Gorley Creek and the artificial spawning channel; the mainstem Grays River now runs through the Gorley Creek streambed. The loss of the Gorley Creek off-channel spawning area increased the chum extinction risk by limiting the most successful spawning to approximately half of Crazy Johnson Creek. The WDFW believes that supplementation should continue until other spawning sites outside Crazy Johnson Creek are restored and proven to be successful.

BPA proposes to take over funding of this existing chum supplementation program. Broodstock is collected from known spawning areas in the Grays River system via seining and hook-and-line. Hatchery origin adult spawner distribution (identified via thermal marks applied during incubation) on the spawning grounds from prior years is used to focus collection in areas that have a high proportion of native spawners. Prior to initiation of broodstock collection, a collection curve and weekly broodstock goals are calculated; approximately 100 pairs of adults are collected annually. Captured adults are held in live tubes at the hatchery until sufficient numbers have been collected for spawning. Adults are spawned using a factorial mating system. Each adult is bio-sampled after spawning. Eggs are incubated and fry are reared at the existing Grays River Fish Hatchery. Once the fry have reached release size criteria, they are released into the mainstem Grays River below chum salmon spawning areas.

Approximately 150,000-200,000 fry are released yearly. All fry released are thermally marked during incubation to allow for identification as adults.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources (see attached checklist).

This proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Nancy Weintraub

Nancy H. Weintraub
Environmental Project Manager – KEC-4

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer – KEC-4

DATE: October 8, 2009

Attachment:
Checklist

cc:
Mr. Todd Hillson, WDFW

bcc:

P. Key – LC-7

Official File – KEC (EQ-15)

nhweintraub:nhw:5373:9/25/2009

<http://bpaweb/orgs/orgs main/efw/epa/fandw/FWPROJ/GRChumCX.doc>

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Grays River Chum Supplementation

Fish and Wildlife 2008-710-00

Project #: _____

This project has been found to not adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect With Conditions
1. Cultural Resources No ground disturbance would occur, all activities at existing facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) NOAA - chum are listed, WDFW has submitted HGMP to NMFS (attached in Pisces). USFWS - bull trout are listed, but determined no effect because they are highly unlikely to be present in chum areas, except possible rare migrant adults. None have ever been encountered by WDFW in the Gray's River program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands No ground disturbance would occur, all activities at existing facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation Not present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety No issues -- hatchery practices are consistent with WDFW health and safety requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands Not present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water Not present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations Yes, existing program is consistent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

none

Signed: /s/ Nancy Weintraub

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