

memorandum

DATE: February 15, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Jay Marcotte
Project Manager, KEWU-4

Proposed Action: Old School House Property Funding

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 2009-003-00

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Real property transfers for cultural resources protection, habitat preservation, and wildlife management.

Location: Twisp, Okanogan County, WEA

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund the purchase of 63.7 acres in Okanogan County, Washington to protect fish habitat and wildlife habitat. The property includes 1,480 feet of Beaver Creek, a tributary of the Methow River. The Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation (MSRF) will purchase the property, and BPA will receive a conservation easement to ensure the habitat is protected forever. The Yakama Nation will restore riparian and in-stream habitat after the purchase is complete. MSRF will work with BPA and the Yakama Nation to develop a management plan that protects opportunities for continuance of existing agricultural and residential uses of these properties. BPA and MSRF have agreed that the property can be sold in the future as long as the fish habitat is protected as described in BPA's conservation easement. Residential home site development, road construction, off-road recreational vehicle use, filling, diking, excavation, vegetation removal, and other damaging activities within the riparian area will be prohibited.

A stewardship plan that identifies restoration activities and future productive uses allowed to occur on the property will be completed by MSRF in cooperation with the Yakama Nation. MSRF will provide an opportunity for public review and comment on the plan once it has been drafted. BPA will review and must approve the plan before it is implemented.

BPA's proposed funding is part of ongoing efforts to protect, restore, and enhance habitat for Upper Columbia steelhead and spring Chinook that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Purchasing this land would partially mitigate for the construction and operation of the dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers, and would satisfy some of BPA's requirements for the Columbia River basin identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service 2008 Biological Opinion that guides the protection of salmon and steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

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, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011). 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, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, 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, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

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/ Ted Gresh

Ted Gresh

Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 15, 2012

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Old School House

Work Order #: Fish and Wildlife Project No. 2099-003-00

This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed: /s/ Ted Gresh

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