

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION



RECIPIENT:Hydro Research Foundation

STATE: TN

PROJECT TITLE : Hydro Research Foundation University Research Awards - U of Tenn

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0000832	DE-EE0006506	GFO-0006506-003	GO6506

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources Field and laboratory research, inventory, and information collection activities that are directly related to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources or to the protection of cultural resources, provided that such activities would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on fish and wildlife habitat or populations or to cultural resources.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the Hydro Research Foundation (HRF) to provide grants via pass through awards to individual research projects through its University Research Awards Program. The purpose of the grants is to support innovative research related to conventional or pumped-storage hydropower, stimulate interest among students and universities in the hydropower research arena, and provide students with a foundation for productive careers related to the hydropower industry.

DOE completed a previous NEPA review (GFO-0006506-001 CX A9 2/7/2014) that included administrative planning and development of a Hydro Fellowship Program that would competitively award hydro-power related, graduate-level research projects for one-to-two year periods of study. This NEPA determination applies to activities associated with one of the projects which has been selected to receive a grant award from the HRF.

The awardee would use grant funding to document spawning migration and successful spawning by Lake Sturgeon in the Upper Tennessee River system by capturing reproductively mature individuals, fertilized eggs, larvae, and juveniles from the tailwaters below a set of dams spread throughout the river system. The proposed project would go on to describe the environmental conditions associated with spawning migration of Lake Sturgeon, quantify suitability of each tailwater as spawning habitat for Lake Sturgeon, and generate management recommendations for dam managers to increase the likelihood of successful Lake Sturgeon spawning in subsequent years.

Adult Lake Sturgeon would be collected using gill nets, trotlines, and electrofishing. Juveniles would be collected using larval drift nets. Eggs would be collected using an egg trap. A small number of voucher specimens of each life stage would be kept and preserved. The Lake Sturgeon is a state-listed endangered species in Tennessee. The proposed project would collect samples of different life stages of Lake Sturgeon under an existing scientific collection permit issued by the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency. The proposed project would perform sampling in accordance with the requirements set forth in this permit. All methods of sample collection would be monitored closely while deployed and are designed to avoid capture of federally-listed endangered or threatened species. Following informal consultation with the USFWS, DOE confirmed that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect any federally-listed species due to the minimal chance of occurrence at the collection site locations.

Collection of samples would occur in the tailwaters of Douglas Dam, French Broad River, Sevier County, TN, Cherokee Dam, Holston River, Jefferson and Grainger Counties, TN, Norris Dam, Clinch River, Anderson and Campbell Counties, TN, Fort Loudon Dam, Tennessee River, Loudon County, TN, Melton Hill Dam, Clinch River, Roane and Loudon Counties, TN, Tellico Dam, Little Tennessee River, Loudon County, TN, and Watts Bar Dam, Tennessee River, Meigs and Rhea Counties, TN.

Based on a review of the project information and the above analysis, DOE has determined that activities included in the University of Tennessee Lake Sturgeon proposed project would not have significant individual or cumulative impact to human health and/or environment. DOE has determined that the work outlined is consistent with the actions identified in categorical exclusion B3.3 "Research related to conservation of fish and wildlife," and is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Note to Specialist :

Review completed by Logan Sholar on 6-10-14.

This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Date: 6/18/2014
NEPA Compliance Officer

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager