

## Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Deep River Mouth 3 Property Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

**Fish and Wildlife Project No. and Contract No.:** 2010-073-00; BPA-007862

**Project Manager:** Anne Creason – KEWL-4

**Location:** Township 10 North, Range 08 West, Section 31, Wahkiakum County, Washington

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to fund Columbia Land Trust (Land Trust) to purchase the Deep River Mouth 3, a 30-acre parcel of land located approximately 4 miles southeast of Rosburg in Wahkiakum County, Washington. The property would be placed under a conservation easement to provide long-lasting fish and wildlife benefits by preventing the conversion of fish and wildlife habitat to other land uses. In addition, BPA would provide stewardship funds toward maintenance of the property.

Funding the purchase and stewardship of the property would help mitigate impacts due to the construction and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System which includes dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers. This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's Columbia River estuary mitigation requirements as identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service 2008/2010/2014 Biological Opinion that guides BPA's protection of salmon and steelhead listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The property consists of historic estuarine and riparian habitat. The Land Trust would provide long-term stewardship of the land and develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and other resources on the property. The management plan would be reviewed by BPA for consistency with the agreement and purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund restoration actions on the property, additional environmental review would be conducted.

**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, July 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/ Jesse Wilson

Jesse Wilson  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
David Evans and Associates, Inc.

Reviewed by:

/s/ Don Rose

Don Rose  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 26, 2015

Attachment: 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.

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### Project Site Description

The project site consists of intertidal and historically intertidal wetlands and contains 0.18 miles of Deep River frontage. The intertidal wetlands outside of the levee are habitat for local origin coho, Chinook, and steelhead. Because the property is at the confluence of the Deep and Columbia Rivers, it also hosts out of basin Columbia River salmon and steelhead stocks.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

| Environmental Resource Impacts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No Potential for Significance       | No Potential for Significance, with Conditions |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that the Land Trust would comply with all applicable laws and regulations. |                                     |                                                |
| 2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                                |
| 3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                                |
| 4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                                |
| 5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                     |                                                |

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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

Explanation: Soils within the site are mapped as prime farmland if drained. The site is currently protected by a levee; however, no recent agriculture activities have occurred within the site. There will be no effect to the farmland designation due to the land acquisition which includes transfer of title. The conservation easement would place restrictions and agricultural activities; however, none currently occur within the property therefore there will be no effect. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that the Land Trust would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

### **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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: A public notification letter would be sent to property owners within one quarter of a mile of the proposed land acquisition and ads placed in local newspapers prior to funding.

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

Signed: /s/ Jesse Wilson

Jesse Wilson, KEC-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
David Evans and Associates, Inc.

Date: May 26, 2015