

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Taneum Creek Property Acquisition Funding

Fish and Wildlife Project No. and Contract No. : 1997-051-00; BPA-008237

Project Manager: Sandra Fife

Location: Township 18 North, Range 17 East, Section 5, Kittitas County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to fund the purchase of the Taneum Creek Property, a 15-acre parcel of land located 8 miles northwest of Ellensburg in Kittitas County, Washington. The property would be owned and managed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and BPA would hold a conservation easement to prevent the conversion of fish and wildlife habitat on the property to other land uses.

Funding for the purchase of the property would partially fulfill BPA's commitments to mitigate for impacts to fish and wildlife from the Federal Columbia River Power System in the Columbia River Basin. This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's commitments made in the Yakama Nation Yakima-Klickitat Fisheries Project under the 2008 Fish Accords.

The property consists of aquatic, riparian, floodplain and terrestrial habitat along Taneum Creek. WDFW would incorporate the Taneum Creek property into the existing L.T. Murray Wildlife Areas Management Plan to guide the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat on the property. BPA would review the plan for consistency with the conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any further activities, additional environmental review may 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 A 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/ Jennifer Snyder

Jennifer Snyder
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
David Evans and Associates, Inc.

Reviewed by: Donald Rose

/s/ Donald Rose

Donald Rose
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Date: August 26, 2015

Stacy L. Mason
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.

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Project Site Description

The project site includes approximately 15 acres of terrestrial, floodplain, riparian, and aquatic habitats along a one-third mile reach of Taneum Creek. The site has historically been utilized for agriculture and cattle-grazing and is not in pristine condition. Upstream fish passage was completely blocked and all of the stream flow was appropriated for out of stream water uses. However, since the late 1980's habitat restoration projects have commenced, beginning with the installation of fish ladders and screens, abandonment of logging roads, and implementation of floodplain restoration projects. Past livestock impacts have been minimized through reduced grazing intensity, and a 2011 flood promoted an increase in native woody vegetation. Despite its modest size, the property is strategically located only 2.1 creek miles upstream of Taneum Creek's confluence with the Yakima River. The property is proximate to the 54,070 acre L.T. Murray Wildlife Area, which is owned and managed by WDFW.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the

creation of a conservation easement.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

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



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no effect due to the land acquisition which includes the transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement.

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 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: Notification letters will be sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties at a minimum of 15 days before the closing date of the sale. Ads will also be posted in local newspapers, and information will be posted on BPA's public website prior to closing.

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

Signed: /s/ Jennifer Snyder

Date: August 26, 2015