

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Nason Creek–Rm 4.6 Floodplain Reconnection Project

Project No.: 2010-001-00

Project Manager: Joe Connor

Location: Coles Corner, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.20 Protection of Cultural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund Chelan County Department of Natural Resources to install a box culvert under SR 207 in order to reconnect a section of Nason Creek to about 13 acres of floodplain. The project would involve removing about 400 feet of the two-lane road, constructing about 500-feet of temporary one-lane road to divert traffic from the construction area, excavating 250 feet of side channel, and installing a 18-foot-span, three-sided precast concrete box culvert.

Approximately 0.10 acres of small trees and shrubby vegetation would be disturbed and one pine tree removed. The temporary road would be taken out and all disturbed areas would be reseeded following construction. An approximate 170-foot by 50-foot staging area would be identified in a flat, previous disturbed area in the vicinity of the construction for equipment and material storage.

The work would occur on US Forest Service Land (Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest) and would improve habitat conditions for fish and wildlife species including Upper Columbia River spring Chinook, Upper Columbia River steelhead, and bull trout and serve as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of the dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers.

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/ Ted Gresh

Ted Gresh
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient/CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad J. Hamel

Chad J. Hamel
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 1, 2018

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.

Proposed Action: Nason Creek–Rm 4.6 Floodplain Reconnection Project

Project Site Description

Nason Creek is a perennial stream with a contributing drainage at the project site, approximately 103 miles from the eastern slopes of the Cascade Range and joining the Wenatchee River immediately downstream of Lake Wenatchee. Washington State Route (Straight Reach) 207 parallels Nason Creek through the project area and is the primary constraint to channel processes. SR 207 was previously located on the hillside to the east of its current alignment and was relocated to its current alignment to accommodate faster traffic speeds. Nason Creek contains major spawning areas for ESA-listed spring Chinook salmon and steelhead, and is a bull trout core area. The Nason Creek drainage supports the second strongest population of spawning spring Chinook in the Wenatchee subbasin.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A BPA cultural resource specialists determined that the planned work would have no adverse effect on historic properties. On March 1, 2018, the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with this determination. The Yakima Nation and Colville tribes were consulted regarding the project. BPA did not receive responses from the Yakima Nation Or Colville tribes.</p> <p>Note: Treat potential discoveries of archeological materials with the ‘inadvertent discovery’ guidelines: Stop work, contact BPA ECT lead and BPA ECC archeologist for further notifications, and ensure integrity of site and materials until further instructions.</p>		
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Excavation within the existing channel would result in 290 cy of soil being removed from the site. Areas impacted during construction would be decompacted and seeded with native vegetation.</p> <p>Measures to minimize impacts would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize the construction disturbance area and removal of vegetation to the greatest extent possible. • Locate staging areas in previously disturbed or graveled areas, where practicable, to minimize soil and vegetation disturbance. • Install project during the summer when water levels are at their lowest and to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and soil compaction. • Minimize the area of soils exposed at any one time and use dust abatement measures when necessary. 		
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Explanation: A total of about 0.10 acres of riparian shrub vegetation would be cleared for the purpose of constructing the project, including one pine tree larger than 6 inches dbh and several smaller trees (general types?). Native woody material removed during clearing and grubbing activities would be incorporated as part of

the project as practicable or disposed of offsite. Protection of native vegetation includes installing perimeter fencing to delineate the extent of clearing activities and identify the vegetation to be preserved. Additional pre-construction surveys would be necessary to determine the number of trees to be preserved.

Mitigation measures:

- Inspect equipment to remove vegetation and dirt clods that may contain noxious weeds.
- Dispose of excavated noxious weeds in a manner that prevents reestablishment in wetlands and adjacent areas.

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: Nesting birds would be protected by timing the tree and brush removal until after the general nesting season. The threatened and endangered (T&E) wildlife species noted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as potentially occurring in the area are not present and do not have habitat requirements met at the sites. These include: Canadian lynx, grizzly bear, grey wolf, marbled murrelet, yellow-billed cuckoo, and Northern Spotted Owl.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation:

Nason Creek is designated critical habitat for ESA listed fish species: Upper Columbia Spring Chinook, Upper Columbia steelhead, and bull trout. The Nason 4.6 project includes the replacement 13 acres of historical Nason Creek floodplain that would provide off-channel habitat for rearing and refuge for juvenile spring Chinook and steelhead during the high-flow season in Nason Creek by creating a surface water connection between the existing floodplain and the main channel. Because the project would be constructed in late summer, river levels would be low enough so that most of the grading and earthwork would be done inside an area separated from Nason Creek by coffer dams.

Conservation measures would be required by BPA's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP III) programmatic ESA coverage.

The end result of the project would be an increase in available habitat for ESA listed species and all other aquatic species that utilize such habitats.

Mitigation measures:

- The work will be isolated from Nason Creek.
- Design plans will include all isolation elements, fish release areas, and, when a pump is used to dewater the isolation area and fish are present, a fish screen that meets NMFS's fish screen criteria (NMFS 2011, or most current).
- Work area isolation and fish capture activities will occur during periods of the coolest air and water temperatures possible, normally early in the morning versus late in the day, and during conditions appropriate to minimize stress and death of species present.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project would allow for inundation of 13 acres of historic Nason Creek floodplain that is currently impacted by the existing culvert under Highway 207. This inundation would improve wetland habitat and increase their functions.

Mitigation measures:

- The staging would be placed as far from wetlands or other sensitive habitats as possible.
- Sediment fencing would be placed around the perimeter of the staging area.
- A spill prevention control and countermeasures plan would be developed by the contractor and spill

containment gear including absorbent pads would be on site.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation Groundwater or aquifers would not be adversely impacted by the construction. BMPs would contain contaminants and a dry-season work schedule would limit the potential for inadvertent intrusions to the water supplies.

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



Explanation: The project is located on land owned by the U.S. Forest Service and within a Washington Department of Transportation Right-of-Way. Chelan County Department of Natural Resources would be required to apply for a special use permit that is issued by the U.S. Forest Service. The USFS will determine consistency with the Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forest Master Plan during their review. The project would also be reviewed and approved by Washington Department of Transportation.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: During construction viewers passing through the construction site would notice active work and disturbed lands. Once completed the habitat improvements and culvert replacement would look very similar to existing conditions. Implementation of a planting plan to replace vegetation impacted during construction would insure similar, if not improved, conditions.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Dust would be kept to a minimum in adhering to BMPs for ground-disturbing. There would be small, sporadic, temporary increases in machine exhaust during periods of active work.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: There would be noise that is commonly associated with construction activities. This would be limited to typical daily working hours only and would be temporary. Passers-by would be aware of the work, yet the noise would not disrupt or preclude any planned activities.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Workers on the project would be required to follow all applicable state and/or Federal safety standards. Traffic through the work site would be limited to a single temporary detour lane that would be constructed adjacent to SR 207. Any time traffic is routed through the temporary detour, flaggers would be present at each end of the detour. WSDOT guidelines for work zone safety were the primary source for developing the detour configuration, including such items as: the temporary detour lane consists of an 11 foot traveled way, a 2 foot shy distance on both sides of the traveled way, both sides of the traveled way include traffic safety devices, and a 2 foot buffer space between the work zone and the traffic barriers is included for construction worker safety.

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: U.S. Forest Service is the land owner. Approval of the project is required from U.S. Forest Service and would be permitted through the issuance of a Special Use Permit.

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

Signed: /s/ Ted Gresh
Ted Gresh, ECF-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient, CRGT

Date: March 1, 2018