

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Yamhela Oaks Conservation Overlook Property Acquisition Funding and Stewardship Funding

Fish and Wildlife Project No. and Contract No. : 2011-003-00; BPA-008415

Project Manager: Dorie Welch – KEWM-4

Location: Fairdale and Carlton quadrangles, in Yamhill County, Oregon (near Yamhill, Oregon).

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 the Yamhela Oaks Conservation Overlook property, a 293-acre parcel of land located 0.5 mile west of Yamhill, in Yamhill County, Oregon. The property would be placed under a conservation easement to provide long-lasting wildlife benefits by preventing the conversion of fish and wildlife habitat to other land uses. BPA would also provide stewardship funds toward maintenance of the property to the landowner, Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District.

Funding the purchase of the property and long-term stewardship would partially fulfill commitments made in the 2010 “Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Wildlife Habitat Protection and Enhancement between the State of Oregon and the Bonneville Power Administration.” This is part of BPA’s ongoing efforts to mitigate for impacts to fish and wildlife of the construction and operation of Willamette River Basin federal flood control facilities from which BPA markets hydropower. Placing this property in a conservation easement would provide long-lasting wildlife benefits as part of a growing network of conservation lands in the Willamette Valley that are preventing the conversion of fish and wildlife habitat to other land uses.

The property consists of 293 acres of oak savanna, oak woodland, and riparian forest and shrubland. The Yamhill County Soil and Water Conservation District will provide long-term stewardship of the land and develop a management plan to guide the protection and enhancement of 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 any management activities 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 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/ Israel Duran

Israel Duran
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Donald Rose

Donald Rose
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 25, 2015

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist
Public Notification Map

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 293-acre Yamhela Oaks Conservation Overlook property is currently under private ownership; consists of oak savanna, oak woodland, and riparian forest and shrubland habitat and is located in Yamhill County, Oregon.

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. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that Greenbelt Land Trust would comply with all applicable laws and regulations.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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



Explanation: See explanation for #1 above.

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:

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 (proposed closing date 9/28/15) 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/ Israel Duran

Date: August 25, 2015