

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Melvin R. Sampson Hatchery Well Drilling

Project No.: 2008-465-00

Project Manager: Amy Mai, Fish & Wildlife Administrator, EWU

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.18 Water Supply Wells

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to provide funds to the Yakama Nation to drill and conduct flow tests for seven groundwater production wells at the Holmes Ranch property in Kittitas County, Washington. These wells will help to determine water availability, drawdown, and temperature which would inform the water rights analysis and permitting processes associated with the proposed Melvin R. Sampson hatchery project on the property.

The wells will be drilled using a truck-mounted well drill rig, transported to the site via an existing county road and an existing access road on the Holmes Ranch property. After reaching the property, the truck will drive across the grass at the property to the designated well locations. Each well will be approximately 30-feet deep with a 10-inch diameter PVC pipe casing. The lower 10 feet of the well will consist of a well screen. The subsurface gravel and sands removed from the well during the drilling activity will be discharged adjacent to the well head, then collected and reused for suitable fill material if the Melvin R. Sampson hatchery is approved for construction. Upon completing the well installation, each well will be fitted with a temporary pump tied to a standby generator power source. Each well pump will be capable of delivering between 100 to 150 gpm at the required piping discharge pressure. The well testing will be executed with all 7 wells running simultaneously to confirm the well field design flow, drawdown, and performance during a sustained operation. The water discharged from the pumps will be discharged on the ground adjacent to the well head. With the testing complete, the temporary pumps will be removed from the wells, and the pumps and generator removed from the project site. A flange will be bolted on to the top of each exposed well head to prevent access and protect the well. If the proposed hatchery is approved on the site, permanent pumps and equipment would be installed. Well installation would take approximately 2-3 weeks, while pump testing and subsequent cleanup and demobilization would take approximately 1 week apiece.

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/ Dave Goodman

Dave Goodman

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 27, 2017

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:

Under the proposed action, seven groundwater wells would be drilled on the Holmes Ranch property. These wells will help to determine groundwater availability, drawdown, and temperature to inform the water rights analysis and permitting processes associated with the proposed Melvin R. Sampson hatchery project on the property.

Project Site Description

The action would take place on the Yakama Nation's Holmes Ranch property in Kittitas County, Washington. The property is situated about 5 miles northwest of Ellensburg, Washington. The property is bordered by I-90 to the south, Klocke Road to the east, John Wayne Pioneer Trail (a National Recreation Trail) to the north, and private property to the west. The property is near the Yakima River. A canal, called the New Cascade Canal, diverts water from the Yakima River about 1 mile northwest (and upstream) of the property. Some of that water is used for irrigation, while some flows into the New Cascade Bypass channel that runs through the property, then drains into a historical side channel of the Yakima River, and then into the Yakima River. Bypass water from the canal, in addition to groundwater, supports a series of large, deep ponds that are currently used to acclimate coho from mid-March to May.

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> The proposed activities do not have the potential to affect historic or cultural resources. Section 106 consultation on the overall Melvin R. Sampson hatchery project is complete with DAHP concurrence as to BPA's determination of "no historic properties affected." The proposed wells would not result in surface disturbance to any known resource.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Well drilling and testing would result in minimal effect to geology and soils associated with the excavation and removal of gravel and sands associated with the wells, in addition to transport of the drill rig to the proposed well locations. Erosion potential associated with the transportation of the drill rig is expected to be minimal as the truck will use existing access roads to the extent possible and will then drive across grassy fields to reach the proposed well locations. Areas disturbed during construction would be revegetated after construction with appropriate native vegetation to minimize the potential for erosion.		
Mitigation measures applicable to the well drilling include:		
<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.Drill the wells during the dry season (between June 1 and November 1) to minimize erosion,		

sedimentation, and soil compaction.

- Minimize the area of soils exposed at any one time and use dust abatement measures when necessary.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation: Well drilling and testing would not impact federal- or state-listed plants because no designated species or suitable habitat is present at the project study area. Vegetation removal would be minimized and limited to disturbance associated with the wells themselves. Areas disturbed during construction would be revegetated after construction with appropriate native vegetation.

Mitigation measures applicable to the well drilling include:

- 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: The proposed well drilling and testing does not have the potential to affect wildlife. The proposal would not impact ESA-listed wildlife species or potential suitable habitat because neither are known to occur in the project study area.

Mitigation measures applicable to the well drilling include:

- Clean work areas would be maintained with proper litter control and sanitation to prevent wildlife attraction.

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



Explanation:

All proposed wells would be outside of the 100-year floodplain adjacent to the Yakima River. Well drilling would occur on land and would have no impacts on the Yakima River or historical side channel or fish species therein.

Mitigation measures applicable to the well drilling include:

- Inspect machinery daily for fuel or lubricant leaks and prior to entering wetlands, waterways, or floodplains, and completely clean off any external petroleum products, hydraulic fluid, coolants, and other pollutants.
- Prohibit discharge of vehicle wash water into any stream, water body, or wetland without pretreatment to meet State water quality standards.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Six of the seven wells proposed to be drilled would have a zone of influence outside of any delineated wetland boundary. The seventh well would be drilled outside of the wetland, but would impact approximately 0.03 acres of transitional emergent wetland. Overall impacts to project wetlands are expected to be minimal. The locations of the wells were modified in the latest version of the design documents to avoid wetlands to the maximum extent possible. Two of the proposed well locations were moved out of the delineated wetland to the buildable area.

Mitigation measures applicable to the well drilling include:

- When working next to wetlands and waterways, limit disturbance to the minimum necessary to achieve construction objectives, minimize habitat alteration, and limit the effects of erosion and sedimentation.
- Re-grade disturbed wetlands and vegetated areas to pre-construction contours and revegetate with appropriate native species.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Testing completed for groundwater at the project site indicates that the aquifer for the project is less than 30-feet deep and is heavily influenced by the Yakima River and irrigation water, and is sensitive to recharge and storage. Preliminary groundwater testing indicated that pumping groundwater would cause localized groundwater drawdown near each of the wells; however, recharge of the aquifer was found to occur within minutes and would be localized to the project area. The wells would be spaced sufficiently far from each other to minimize impacts within the property itself. The total groundwater right of 2.5 CFS is currently in the process of being permitted by Washington's Department of Ecology; if the groundwater application were not permitted, the wells would be capped and would have no ongoing impact on groundwater. The pump test to be conducted would help to monitor effects on groundwater during periods of peak groundwater demand for fish rearing (April - December).

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



Explanation: The proposed activities do not have the potential to affect land use or specially designated areas. The property is owned by the Yakama Nation and the well drilling would have no impact on the use of the property or its designation.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The only visible features associated with the wells would be the caps of the wells post-drilling, which would have a minor visual impact.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be generated during transportation of the drill rig to the site and subsequent well drilling. Dust control measures would be implemented during removal, if needed.

Mitigation measures applicable to the well drilling include:

- Minimize the area of soils exposed at any one time and use dust abatement measures when necessary.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise associated with the drilling of the wells would be generated and limited to daylight hours. During the flow testing, generators at each of the seven wells would create temporary noise for the extent of the simultaneous well tests.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The drilling of the proposed wells does not have the potential to affect human health and safety. The wells will be capped with a flange and will not be accessible after the well testing is complete. Construction areas would be controlled by the construction contractor and would be limited to approved personnel.

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: The Holmes Ranch property is currently owned by the Yakama Nation, the project sponsor for the proposed action. The Yakama Nation has expressed support of the proposed groundwater well drilling and testing to inform the water analysis for the Melvin R. Sampson Hatchery Project, which has been proposed and would be operated by the Yakama Nation.

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

Signed: /s/Dave Goodman
Dave Goodman, ECF-4

Date: June 27, 2017