

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Upper Methow Groundwater Slough

Project No.: 2009-003-00

Project Manager: Sandra Fife

Location: Mazama, WA

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 proposes to fund the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (YN) for the purchase of approximately 13 acres of property, referred to as the Upper Methow Groundwater Slough Property Acquisition in Okanogan County, WA. The YN will own and manage the Upper Methow Groundwater Slough property for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and BPA will receive a conservation easement to ensure that the habitat values on the property are always protected.

This land purchase would serve as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of the dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers. It also satisfies some of BPA's mitigation requirements for the Columbia River estuary as identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service 2008/2010 Biological Opinion that guides BPA's protection of salmon and steelhead listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The Upper Methow Groundwater Slough property provides habitat for fish and wildlife species in the Columbia River estuary including coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead, Columbia white-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk, and river otter.

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 Hamel

Chad Hamel

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Office

Date: August 21, 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: Upper Methow Groundwater Slough Property Acquisition

Project Site Description

The 13-acre Upper Methow Groundwater Slough Property is currently privately owned; riparian and upland habitat are dominant; and the property is located in along the Methow River, approximately 3 miles downstream from the town of Mazama in Okanogan County, WA.

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 creation of a conservation easement. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> See explanation for #1 above		
8. Land Use and Specially Designated Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> 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 would be sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties at a minimum of 15 days before the closing date (proposed closing date is September 30, 2018) of the sale. Advertisements 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 to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Ted Gresh

Date: August 21, 2018

Ted Gresh - ECF-4

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient/CRGT