

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Yakama Nation's Data Collection for West Fork Teanaway Large Wood Placement Project

**Project No.:** 1997-051-00

**Project Manager:** Daniel Newberry, EWU-4

**Location:** Kittitas County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to fund the Yakama Nation, Yakima Klickitat Fisheries Project (YKFP), to implement pre-project studies for the West Fork Teanaway Large Wood Placement Project. These projects would take place on state public land in Kittitas County of Washington State.

The YKFP proposes implementing preliminary work for the West Fork Teanaway Community Forest Large Wood Placement Project that would consist of excavating 15 groundwater test pits to characterize subsurface sediment texture, stratigraphy, and depth of groundwater. YKFP would mechanically excavate the test pits utilizing a mini excavator with a 16-inch bucket. The pits would measure approximately 16 to 24 inches wide, 4 to 8 feet long, and would be excavated to a maximum depth of 10 feet. Pipes for groundwater monitoring piezometers would be installed within the excavated test pits. Once subsurface measurements, piezometer installation, and notes are captured, the groundwater test pits would be backfilled with the excavated soils.

These actions would support the conservation of ESA-listed species considered in the 2020 ESA consultations with both National Marine Fisheries Service on the Operations and Maintenance of the Columbia River System. These actions also support BPA's commitments to the Yakama Nation in the Columbia River Fish Accord, as amended, while also supporting ongoing efforts to mitigate for effects of the Federal Columbia River Power System on fish and wildlife in the mainstem Columbia River and its tributaries pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act of 1980 (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. (USC) 839 et seq.).

**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, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996; 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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.<sup>1</sup>

Catherine Clark  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

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<sup>1</sup> BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*

# 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:** Yakama Nation’s Data Collection for West Fork Teanaway Large Wood Placement Project

## **Project Site Description**

The groundwater testing would be located between river miles 5.2 and 6.9 along the West Fork Teanaway River on Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-managed property in the Teanaway Community Forest which is primarily dominated by Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Grand fir (*Abies grandis*). Historically, the Teanaway Community Forest (Forest) property has been utilized for grazing, timber harvest, and recreation. The primary goal of the property is protecting and enhancing habitat while also maintaining working lands for forestry and grazing.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) on the proposed project on October 28, 2024 (WA 2024 183). Consulting parties included the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). BPA reviewed a cultural resource inventory report for the project, which documented an archaeological site, 45KT4808. On March 18, 2025, BPA determined that site 45KT4808 is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and that the proposed project would result in no historic properties affected. DAHP concurred with this determination on March 18, 2025. No other responses were received from consulting parties.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Soil would be displaced during pit and data logger installation. The depth of soil disturbance would not exceed ten feet. All excavation would be backfilled following installation. Therefore, the proposed actions would have minimal impact to soils.

### **3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed or state special status plant species in the project areas. Plants in the immediate vicinity of each project area would be subject to short term impacts as a result of trampling by vehicles used to reach the project sites. Vegetation within the project sites would be excavated, this would not be expected to have long term impacts to plant communities. To reduce impacts to plant species, large

mats of existing topsoil would be set aside during excavation, these mats would then be placed on top of the backfilled material following completion of implementation. Those efforts are expected to result in revegetation of the disturbed areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence at the project sites. However, the proposed actions would be temporary (no more than a few hours at each site) and would be largely consistent with human activity typical of the sites. Wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely be accustomed to this level of activity. The proposed actions would not result in adverse modification to suitable protected species habitat. Therefore, the proposed actions would have no effect on ESA-listed or state special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The West Fork Teanaway Rivers contain ESA-listed Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and their critical habitat; however, all test pits would be implemented above the ordinary high water mark and there would be no impact to ESA-listed or state special status fish species.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands are not present within the West Fork Teanaway project area; therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Groundwater test pits would not withdraw or divert water from the groundwater system. Spill prevention measures would be present to prevent the potential for groundwater contamination.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Forest is utilized for grazing, timber harvest, and recreation. Implementation of the test pits may cause a day-long disruption to users but would not change the land use of the Forest in the long term.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Visual quality would have minor changes associated with excavation but would return to pre-project conditions upon revegetation and would not change in the long term as a result of the proposed actions.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with the use of excavation equipment would occur.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary noise increases associated with vehicles and excavation equipment would occur.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All personnel would use best management practices to protect worker health and 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: N/A

**Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.**

Explanation: N/A

**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: N/A

**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: N/A

## **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Yakama Nation will work with Washington Department of Natural Resources for access to all site locations.

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

Signed:

Catherine Clark  
Environmental Protection Specialist