

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Crooked Creek 4 Property Acquisition Funding

Fish and Wildlife Project No. and Contract No. : 2010-073-00, 73737

Project Manager: Steve Gagnon

Location: Wahkiakum County, 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 is proposing to fund the Columbia Land Trust to purchase the Crooked Creek 4 Property, a 31-acre parcel of land located in Wahkiakum County, WA. The United States would hold a conservation easement, which BPA would manage, to permanently protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitat.

The funding would be provided as part of BPA's ongoing efforts to protect, restore, and enhance habitat for salmon listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The acquisition would serve as partial mitigation for the construction and operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System, which includes dams on the main stem Columbia and Snake Rivers. This land purchase would specifically satisfy some of BPA's Columbia River estuary mitigation requirements as identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service 2008/2010/2014 Biological Opinion that guides BPA's protection of salmon and steelhead listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The property consists of tidal wetland habitat. The Columbia Land Trust would 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 conservation easement and the purpose of the acquisition. If BPA proposes to fund any additional activities on the property, further environmental review may 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/ Dave Goodman

Dave Goodman

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Date: October 27, 2016

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

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.

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Project Site Description

The Crooked Creek 4 property borders 1,190 feet of Columbia River/Grays Bay and 1,135 feet of Crooked Creek stream frontage and 30 acres of historically intertidal wetlands. It is adjacent to 119 already conserved acres to the east. Prior to site alteration, the historically tidal wetlands would have been used by migrating juvenile salmon and steelhead. Decades ago, a ditch was installed to drain the property for grazing and fill was placed along Crooked Creek, limiting connectivity. Currently, the property hosts waterfowl, beaver, elk, and bear. With restoration of this and the adjacent property, the property would provide critical juvenile off-channel habitat for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Columbia River salmonids, eucaloon (smelt), and other fish.

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 which includes transfer of title and the creation of a conservation easement. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that the Columbia 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**

Explanation: 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: A public notification letter and map will be mailed to neighboring landowners and other interested parties prior to site closing. Advertisements will also be placed in local newspapers.

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

Signed: /s/ Dave Goodman Date: October 27, 2016