

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Monitoring Activities in Support of Snake River Fall Chinook Hatchery Production

**Project No.:** 2012-013-00

**Project Manager:** D. Docherty, EWM-4

**Location:** Various locations in the Snake and Clearwater Basins in Washington and Idaho: Franklin, Walla Walla, Columbia, Whitman, Garfield, and Asotin Counties, Washington; Nez Perce, Clearwater, and Idaho Counties, Idaho.

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B3.16 Research activities in aquatic environments

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to provide funds to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho (Nez Perce Tribe) to radio tag and use telemetry to track hatchery-released returning adult (aged 4 and 5) Snake River fall Chinook. The purpose of the monitoring is to track the fish to their final spawning locations in the Clearwater and Snake river basins. Data obtained from the tagged fish would be analyzed based on juvenile release location and life stage released (sub-yearling and yearling). This data would be used to help determine the feasibility of altering the percentage of hatchery origin spawners (pHOS) via modified hatchery release locations associated with the Snake River Fall Chinook Hatchery Program.

Radio tags would be inserted in about 50 to 350 adult fish, depending on run size, captured at the Lower Granite Dam fish ladder. After tagging, the fish would be placed in a recovery pool and then released to continue their upstream migration. Telemetry data would be downloaded from various fixed sites on the Snake River between Lyons Ferry Hatchery and Lower Granite Dam. No new fixed receiver sites are proposed for use. WDFW staff would regularly download the data from the fixed sites. Mobile tracking of individuals would also occur via boat surveys on the Snake and Clearwater rivers. Collected data would be analyzed and shared with partners, such as the Nez Perce Tribe.

**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/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah Biegel

Sarah Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: November 15, 2016

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:**     **Monitoring Activities in Support of Snake River Fall Chinook Hatchery Production**

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### Project Site Description

Adult fall Chinook salmon would be tagged at the Lower Granite Dam adult collection facility. Various fixed, existing telemetry receiver locations would be used along with mobile boat tracking to collect fish location data.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No new receivers would be installed; therefore, there would be no ground disturbance or attachment to potentially-historic structures. No potential to effect.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would be required.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance that would disturb plants, including any ESA-listed plants, would be required.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Work would be conducted at existing locations and would be passive in nature. No wildlife or wildlife habitat, including ESA-listed wildlife, would be disturbed.		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Telemetry monitoring would be passive and would not alter fish habitat or disturb fish. Collection of adults for tagging would occur at the Lower Granite fish ladder. Capture of ESA-listed salmon is covered under National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Section 10 permits 16607 and 16615, which expire in December of 2017. Bull trout capture is covered under US Fish and Wildlife Service Section 10 permit TE82106B-0, which expires in February of 2021.		
6. <b>Wetlands</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance that would disturb wetlands would be required.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No ground disturbance or excavation that would disturb groundwater or introduce contaminants into groundwater would be required.

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

Explanation: All fixed monitoring locations are previously-established and continued use would not alter existing land uses.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: All fixed monitoring locations are previously-established and continued use would not alter existing visual quality of the area.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: No ground disturbance or use of heavy equipment that would produce increased dust or emissions would be required. Some temporary boat or vehicle emissions would be generated during data collection. These emissions would be similar to those generated in the area by other boats or vehicles.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary boat noise would be produced during mobile tracking. Boat noise would be consistent with existing levels of boat noise in the area.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: Appropriate safety measures, such as the use of floatation devices, would be employed for staff working near the water.

### **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:

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

Description: Coordination with several entities, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, who operates the Lower Granite Dam; University of Idaho, who owns/operates several fixed telemetry sites; and other regional partners is ongoing and part of the regular annual planning process.

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

Signed: /s/ Katey Grange      Date: November 15, 2016  
Katey Grange  
Environmental Protection Specialist