

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Boise River Addition Acquisition and Stewardship Funding

Fish and Wildlife Project No. and Contract No. : 1995-057-00; 73692

Project Manager: Sandra Fife

Location: T 3N, R 3E, S 11 & 12, Ada County, ID

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 Idaho Department of Fish and Game to purchase the Boise River Addition, a 240-acre parcel of private land located approximately 7 miles northeast of Boise in Ada County, ID. The property adjoins the Boise River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) on the east, west, and south sides. Privately-owned forest resides to the north. The property would be placed under a conservation covenant for permanent wildlife benefit by preventing the conversion of habitat to other land uses. BPA would also provide stewardship funds toward maintenance of the property to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Funding for this purchase is part of the *Southern Idaho Wildlife Mitigation Memorandum of Agreement* between the State of Idaho and BPA to permanently address the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of wildlife habitat affected by the construction and operation of Federal dams and subsequent inundation of wildlife habitat. The overall goal of this acquisition is to preserve the property as habitat and a wildlife travel corridor.

Because of its elevation and slight north aspect, the property consists of open-forested habitat, which affords excellent escape and thermal cover in an area that is dominated by open rangeland. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game would incorporate the property into the WMA's existing 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 covenant 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/ Ashlee Rudolph

Ashlee Rudolph
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
SalientCRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Jenna Peterson

Jenna Peterson
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: December 19, 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.

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Project Site Description

The land proposed for acquisition is approximately 240 acres of coniferous forest habitat, located approximately 7 miles northeast of Boise in Ada County, Idaho. The primary target species for this project are mule deer and elk, based on current management priorities of the Boise River Wildlife Management Area. Because of its elevation and slight north aspect, it is open-forested habitat that affords excellent escape and thermal cover in an area that is dominated by rangeland. The property is also adjacent to a significant North American migratory corridor for raptors and songbirds along the Boise Ridge. Its value is evident from the close proximity of the Intermountain Bird Observatory, which monitors migratory bird movements between northern latitudes and the Great Basin. When the purchase is complete, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game will own and manage the property for fish and wildlife conservation purposes and BPA will receive a conservation covenant to ensure that the habitat values on the property are always protected.

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 covenant. To the extent that stewardship activities may have an effect, it is expected that the Idaho Department of Fish and Game 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)



Explanation: 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/ Ashlee Rudolph
Ashlee Rudolph, SalientCRGT
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: December 19, 2016