

**U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT**  
**FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and determined that the following proposed action is categorically excluded from NEPA documentation requirements consistent with **40 CFR 1508.4, 516 DM 2.3A, 516 DM 2 Appendix 1, and 516 DM 8 B(3)**.

**Proposed Action and Alternatives.** *Describe the proposed action and any alternatives explored. Discuss briefly why proposed action was selected over other alternatives.*

Power Dam is located at Lat: 36°59'43.79"N, Lon: 79°51'36.06"W just upstream of the Rt. 713 bridge over the Pigg River in Franklin County, Virginia. Constructed in 1915 for power generation, the defunct dam measures 25 feet high by 200 feet long. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is working with the owner, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia (FORVA), Franklin County, Town of Rocky Mount, and others to remove the dam. The culmination of 12 years of planning by conservation partners, this project will remove the last impediment within a 72 mile reach of the Pigg River and restore 2.2 miles of aquatic instream habitat upstream for the federally listed Roanoke logperch (*Percina rex*) and state listed and Bigeye jumprock (*Scartomyzon ariommus*). Other benefits of the project include restoring flood control and channel capacity within the Roanoke River basin, public infrastructure protection for the Rocky Mount Wastewater Treatment Facility and the Rt. 713 bridge, removal of a public safety and boating hazard, and establishing a new public access area and county park for recreational fishing and boating.

Initial design assessments by the USFWS in 2013 determined the best approach for restoring fish passage, maintaining channel stability, minimizing aquatic disturbance and take of Roanoke logperch, preserving historic cultural resources, and achieving other project goals was to remove the center portion (95 feet or 48%) of the dam through a series of notches in order to stage control release of sediments trapped behind the dam. In addition, 140 feet of the upper 8.5 feet of remaining dam material will be removed to match floodplain elevations above the dam in order to restore flood capacity and minimize disturbance to riparian areas upstream. A 50 foot (top) section of dam on the north side will remain undisturbed to preserve and protect the fragile power house and relic dam section as a historical marker and preservation piece. A portion of the south section will also remain undisturbed and together approximately 70% of the base of the dam is proposed to remain intact.

Work completed as of July 2015 includes:

- Sediment contaminant and quantity analyses. No contaminants detected
- Pre-removal water quality and fish biomonitoring
- Informal consultation with USFWS associated with federally listed Roanoke logperch
- Demolition plan and scope of work
- Public and locality coordination
- Coordination with Virginia Department of Transportation regarding access through right of way

- Initial regulatory coordination (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, USFWS, Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ), Virginia Marine Resources Commission)
- Cost of removal estimates ranging between \$750,000 – \$1,000,000

Work ongoing includes:

- Hydrologic Engineering Centers River Analysis System (HEC RAS) and sediment transport modelling under contract, scheduled completion 9/30/15
- Regulatory permitting
  - a. pre application meeting with Corps and VDEQ scheduled for August 2015
  - b. Memorandum Of Understanding with State Historic Preservation Office underway, anticipate completion 9/30/15
  - c. Informal Section 7 consultation with USFWS initiated – awaiting sediment modeling
- Phase I Demolition
  - a. Engineered Site Plans (under contract, scheduled completion 8/1/15)
  - b. Woody debris removal and access (\$120,000 obligated, start work 10/1/15)
  - c. Dam breaching, anticipated after June 30, 2015, funding dependent

Demolition will begin in Summer/Fall of 2016 to comply with time of year restrictions for the aquatic species present.

The project will involve partial removal of the dam and hauling of demolition debris to a designated disposal site located off site. There is an estimated 1800 cubic yards (CY) of dam material, 30,000 CY of woody debris, and 390,000 CY of sediment behind the dam. Removal will be carried out by contract services with access provided through county and FORVA properties. The USFWS will provide design, permitting, project management, and other technical assistance with the planning and implementation of the project. Upon completion of the demolition and removal phase of the project, the exposed channel banks will be permitted to stabilize and re-vegetate naturally.

**Categorical Exclusion(s).** *Quote and provide the Departmental Manual citation(s) for the specific Categorical Exclusions you are using; if it appears necessary, discuss why you believe the action fits as this Categorical Exclusion; mention that the action does not trigger an Exception to the Categorical Exclusions at 516 DM 2 Appendix 2; and/or if it does trigger an Exception, discuss why it does not apply for this action.*

516 DM 8.5 B. (3) The construction of new, or the addition of, small structures or improvements, including structures and improvements for the restoration of wetland, riparian, instream, or native habitats, which result in no or only minor changes in the use of the affected local area. The following are examples of activities that may be included.

- (a) The installation of fences.
- (b) The construction of small water control structures.
- (c) The planting of seeds or seedlings and other minor revegetation actions.
- (d) The construction of small berms or dikes.

- (e) The development of limited access for routine maintenance and management purposes.

**Permits/Approvals.** *Discuss any additional permits/approvals needed before the proposed action can be implemented, such as a Clean Water Act section 404 permit, Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation, and/or National Historic Preservation Act section 106 clearance.*

An informal project review was initiated with the USFWS' Virginia Ecological Services Field Office in July 2014 and a USFWS online project review for Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation was completed on 7/15/2015. A pre-application request was filed with the Norfolk District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality on 7/7/2015 with initial meeting scheduled in August 2015. Coordination begun in 2007 with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and USFWS Regional Historic Preservation Officer was re-initiated in June 2015 and an MOA with the State Historic Preservation Office is in process with an anticipated completion date of 9/30/15.

**Public Involvement/Interagency Coordination.** *Discuss the opportunities provided to the public, other agencies, and/or Tribes to get involved with the proposed action, any significant comments they may have made, and our responses.*

Public notification and 30 day comment period will occur as part of obtaining Franklin County demolition permit.

**Supporting Documents.** Supporting documents for this determination include relevant office file material and the following key references: *(List document citations here.)*

7/17/15

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(Project Leader)

(Date)