Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Proposed Project

SEPA EIS
Update for Chehalis Basin Board

February 7, 2019

EIS Overview

- Applicant: Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District
- SEPA EIS Lead Agency: Ecology
- NEPA EIS Lead Agency: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Separate but coordinated SEPA and NEPA reviews

From Planning to Regulatory Process

Chehalis Basin Strategy Programmatic EIS

- Strategic and planning focus
- Chehalis Basin geographic area
- Planning documents

Flood Damage Reduction Project SEPA EIS

- Regulatory process
- First step, required before permit processes can begin
- Project objective for flood damage reduction from Pe Ell to Centralia
- Legal document

SEPA Lead Agency Perspective

- Ecology goal: Neutral, fact-based, thorough environmental review
- Ecology has legal responsibilities as the lead agency
- SEPA process => identify the probable, significant adverse environmental impacts from a proposal
- Provide information in equitable and transparent manner

SEPA EIS will evaluate impacts to:

- Air Quality
- Amphibians
- Cultural Resources (Historic and archaeological)
- Cumulative Impacts
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Environmental Justice
- Fish
- Geology and Geomorphology (Landslides and earthquakes)
- Habitat and Vegetation
- Land Use
- Noise
- Public Services and Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Resources
- Visual
- Water
- Wetlands
- Wildlife (including impacts to southern resident killer whales)

Geographic Scope of SEPA EIS

- The geographic scope of study is based on where probable, significant environmental impacts from the proposed project could occur
- The scope for each resource will vary based on the analysis and modeling of where impacts could occur
- In general, the scope of study will be:
  - Site of the flood retention facility near Pe Ell
  - Site of Chehalis-Centralia Airport Levee
  - Upriver
  - Downriver
- The SEPA EIS will analyze impacts to fish through life-cycle, including the Chehalis River, tributaries, and ocean
- The SEPA EIS will analyze impacts to southern resident killer whales

SEPA Requirements for Alternatives

- EISs need analyze only the reasonable alternatives and probable adverse environmental impacts that are significant. *(WAC 197-11-402)*
- Reasonable alternatives shall include actions that could feasibly attain or approximate a proposal's objectives, but at a lower environmental cost or decreased level of environmental degradation. *(WAC 197-11-440)*
- The "no-action" alternative shall be evaluated and compared to other alternatives. *(WAC 197-11-440)*

SEPA EIS Alternatives

- The SEPA EIS will analyze:
  - Proposed Project (flood retention facility and levee)
  - No Action Alternative
  - Local Actions Alternative
- The No Action alternative is the expected future if the proposed project is not built.
- A Local Actions alternative that will analyze impacts based on local-scale and nonstructural efforts to improve floodplain function and reduce damage.

Considerations for Localized Actions Alternative

The following elements will be considered for inclusion:

- Afforestation
- Channel migration protection
- Constriction removal
- Early flood warning systems
- Floodplain connection
- Floodproofing
- Groundwater infiltration improvement
- Land use management
- Riparian restoration
- Water flow abatement

Next Steps

Feb. 8, 2019	Update SEPA EIS websites Send email to LISTSERV
Ongoing	Develop SEPA Draft EIS
Feb. 27, 2020	SEPA Draft EIS released