

6 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

This chapter describes consultation and coordination activities led by Ecology with agencies, tribes, and the public. Highlights of activities to date are provided here, along with future outreach plans. Outreach and public involvement efforts will continue throughout the EIS process and future development of the Chehalis Basin Strategy.

6.1 Public Involvement

Ecology has worked closely with other state agencies, tribes, and communities in the Chehalis Basin for the past several years to address flooding and aquatic species habitat concerns. During development of this EIS, Ecology provided updates and information to the public, and solicited input regarding the public's needs, values, and opinions on the alternatives. Both formal and informal public input has been encouraged and used, as described in this chapter.

6.2 EIS Scoping Process

The purpose of the scoping process is to confirm the focus of an EIS by seeking input from agencies, tribal governments, and members of the public on the content and emphasis of the EIS. Scoping also provides notice to the public and other agencies that an EIS is being prepared, and initiates their involvement in the process. Comments received during scoping are used in the following activities:

- Identifying the significant issues relevant to the proposal
- Identifying those elements of the environment that could be affected by the proposal
- Formulating alternatives for the proposal
- Determining the appropriate environmental documents to be prepared



Public involvement provides an opportunity for interested and affected individuals, organizations, tribes, agencies, and governmental entities to be included in the decision-making process. A number of outreach efforts are part of public involvement for the EIS, including formal outreach during the SEPA scoping notice and publication of the Draft EIS, and informal outreach through attendance at festivals, fairs, and community organization events.

Scoping Notice Summary

- **Scoping notice** published in Ecology's SEPA Register on September 18, 2015
- **Legal notices** placed in *The Olympian*, *The Daily World*, and *The Chronicle* on September 22, 2015
- **News release** issued on Ecology's website on September 22, 2015, and distributed to the three newspapers listed above
- **Focus sheet** developed and sent to local communities for posting to community boards
- **Email** with the scoping notice sent to the Government Advisory Team, which includes federal and state agencies and area tribes, on September 18, 2015
- **Email** distributed to the Chehalis Flood Authority's members and interested parties list, including an announcement of the scoping meetings, on September 14, 2015
- **Email** distributed to the local salmon lead entities on September 22, 2015, including the press release and focus sheet
- **Announcement** posted on the Chehalis Basin Strategy website on September 18, 2015

Ecology led a scoping process for the Chehalis Basin Strategy EIS from September 18 to October 19, 2015, in accordance with SEPA requirements (WAC 197-11-408). Ecology invited agencies, tribal governments, and members of the public to provide input on the scope of the EIS relating to the purpose and need, range of alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, and elements of the affected environment to be analyzed in the EIS. Scoping began with the issuance and publication of a Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on the Scope of the Programmatic EIS. The scoping notice was published in Ecology's SEPA Register on September 18, 2015.

Two public scoping meetings were held in the Chehalis Basin during the scoping period. The first scoping meeting was held on September 28, 2015, at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis. The second meeting was held on September 29, 2015, at the Montesano City Hall Banquet Room in Montesano. The meetings began with a short presentation, including a question-and-answer period, followed by an open house. The presentation outlined the environmental review process and described the Chehalis Basin Strategy, including its history and the preliminary alternatives. The meetings included the opportunity for attendees to provide formal public comment through written comment cards or oral comments recorded by a court reporter.

6.3 EIS Scoping Summary

During the scoping period, a total of 43 public comments were received through mail, email, the Chehalis Basin Strategy website, and the scoping meetings. The compiled comments expressed both approval and objections related to proposed action elements and alternatives. Additionally, comments ranged from general (regarding the EIS or the Chehalis Basin Strategy as a whole) to specific (relating to a proposed action element or element of the environment). These comments helped to shape the development and evaluation of alternatives for this EIS, including adding the Restorative Flood Protection and Nonstructural Flood Protection alternatives, expanding the Aquatic Species Habitat Actions scope, evaluating water rights and water supply, and evaluating effects of forest practices. For a full summary of scoping comments, see the *Scoping Summary Report* in Appendix B.



Scoping meeting in Chehalis

Photo credit: The Chronicle, Centralia, Washington

6.3.1 Water Rights and Water Supply

Commenters also addressed water rights and water supply in the Chehalis Basin. Some comments focused on how certain alternatives, such as water retention facilities and aquatic species habitat restoration, have the potential to effect water supply and water rights in the Chehalis Basin. Others brought up how future climate change could affect water supply and demand for both instream and out-of-stream uses, as well as the potential need for augmenting the river flow for human and agricultural use, not solely for aquatic species habitat. In response, an analysis of water supply and water rights is included in the EIS.

6.3.2 Forest Practices

Commenters questioned whether forest practices in the Chehalis Basin contribute to the problems and needs being addressed in the EIS. In particular, comments from Trout Unlimited, American Rivers, and Washington Environmental Council requested an independent evaluation of forest practices in the Chehalis Basin. As a result, Ecology initiated an independent literature review related to forest practices to: 1) understand potential impacts on flood and low flow conditions; 2) characterize the contribution of current and past forest practices to flood intensity and frequency, as well as to summer low flows; and 3) understand the potential for forest practices in the Chehalis Basin to exacerbate landslides and their contribution to sediment to the Chehalis River and its tributaries. The independent literature review summarizes existing information regarding the potential effects of forest practices within the Chehalis Basin on flood frequency and intensity, summer low-flow events, and landslide occurrences (see Appendices A and E).

6.3.3 Additions to Aquatic Species Habitat Actions

Commenters suggested that Aquatic Species Habitat Actions should focus on, and better identify, specific goals for all the salmonid species in the Chehalis Basin, not only spring-run Chinook salmon. The issue of the geographic scope of restoration actions, and a potential need to focus restoration efforts on a more Basin-wide scale was also raised. To address these scoping comments, Aquatic Species Habitat Actions was expanded to address the decline of spring-run and fall-run Chinook salmon, coho salmon, chum salmon, and steelhead, and to restore aquatic species habitat. These measures include removing priority fish passage barriers throughout the Chehalis Basin and improving habitat for amphibians and other wildlife.

6.3.4 Nonstructural Flood Protection Alternative

Comments received during the scoping period suggested that an alternative should be included within the EIS that would accomplish flood damage reduction and aquatic species habitat restoration using nonstructural elements only. There was a request for more robust analysis and quantification of the anticipated outcomes of implementing nonstructural actions, and some suggested that the Basin-wide strategy should prioritize nonstructural activities before implementing any larger-scale, structural actions. In response, this EIS includes an analysis of the Nonstructural Flood Protection alternative, which does not include Large-scale Flood Damage Reduction Actions.

6.3.5 Restorative Flood Protection Alternative

During the EIS scoping period, it was requested that Ecology include a restorative flood protection alternative for evaluation in the EIS. Under this alternative, in-channel wood and vegetated riparian floodplain areas would be utilized to provide flood storage and slow the flow of floodwater. Ecology concluded that the Restorative Flood Protection alternative should be considered and included in the EIS. A number of scoping comments (e.g., DNR, Thurston County, environmental organizations) also expressed support for evaluation of the Restorative Flood Protection alternative in the EIS.

6.4 Additional Public Outreach

In addition to the formal scoping process, informal public involvement has occurred through public outreach opportunities (e.g., fairs and festivals) to share information and solicit input (see Table 6.4-1). Project team representatives attended several festivals and events throughout the Chehalis Basin with display boards and other project information. The display boards provided information on the Chehalis Basin, the environmental review process, the history of the Chehalis Basin Strategy, and the action elements proposed for consideration as part of each EIS combined alternative.

Focus groups were also created to educate and inform landowners and identify activities, support, and incentives that would increase knowledge and stimulate participation in restoration and floodproofing activities. As part of the focus groups, project team members conducted surveys to gauge willingness of

property owners within the Chehalis River floodplain, and the likelihood of participation in restoration and/or floodproofing activities.

**Table 6.4-1
Chehalis Basin Strategy EIS Public Outreach Program Highlights**

| TIMEFRAME | EIS STAGE | OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| September to October 2015 | Scoping and development of EIS alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper notices, community mailings • Email notices to agencies and tribes • Two public scoping open house meetings • Community fairs and festivals |
| January to June 2016 | Focus groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group meetings and individual discussions |
| Winter to summer 2016 | Development of Draft EIS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing fairs, festivals, and general outreach • Landowner, resident, and business owner meetings |
| Fall 2016 | Draft EIS issuance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper notices and community mailings • Public hearings and community meetings • Ongoing fairs, festivals, and general outreach |
| 2017 | Final EIS issuance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuance of Final EIS • Public briefings and discussions |

6.5 Agency and Tribal Coordination

Ecology is the lead agency for the EIS; however, Ecology coordinated with many agencies and tribes during development of this EIS. This was completed through formal groups and review cycles, as well as through informal consultation on specific issues.

6.5.1 Government Advisory Team

At key points throughout the development of the Draft EIS, Ecology obtained input from tribes and interested agencies through the Government Advisory Team (composed of tribal, federal, and state agency representatives) on the purpose and need, scoping notice and process, proposal objectives, range of alternatives, and potential impacts and mitigation. In addition, several members of the Government Advisory Team reviewed sections of the Draft EIS prior to publication.

6.5.2 National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ecology is coordinating with NMFS and USFWS in conjunction with their interests and responsibilities for compliance with ESA and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Consultation with these agencies would be conducted for individual projects carried out under the Chehalis Basin Strategy in the future that could affect listed species or critical habitat, as well as EFH.

6.5.3 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Ecology is coordinating with USACE in conjunction with their interests and responsibilities for waters of the United States. When specific projects are carried forward under the Chehalis Basin Strategy, individual project proponents will apply to USACE for permits under Section 404 of CWA, if necessary.

6.5.4 Tribal Coordination

Two tribes are located in or adjacent to the Chehalis Basin: the Quinault Indian Nation and the Chehalis Tribe. Ecology has coordinated with both tribes during the preparation of this EIS. The Quinault Indian Nation put forth and prepared much of the technical work in support of the Restorative Flood Protection alternative, and was also consulted regarding the analysis of impacts and mitigation related to this alternative. The Quinault Indian Nation and Chehalis Tribe are members of the Governor’s Work Group, and therefore have a role in recommending a proposal to be funded by the Washington State Legislature. In addition, both tribes have provided, and will continue to provide, input throughout the EIS process by sharing knowledge and documentation relevant to the evaluation of impacts and mitigation related to cultural and tribal resources, including impacts on treaty rights.

In the future, consultation with tribes under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act could occur when specific projects in the Chehalis Basin Strategy are carried forward to implementation. For projects not undergoing Section 106 review, consultation with the tribes under Governor’s Executive Order 05-05 could occur for capital construction projects and land acquisitions.

6.5.5 Washington Department of Natural Resources

Because DNR manages state trust lands within the Chehalis Basin, Ecology has collaborated with this agency on development of the EIS. Specific input from DNR was solicited with regard to forest practices, geology, aquatic resources, and fish and wildlife. When specific projects are carried forward under the Chehalis Basin Strategy, individual project proponents may need to submit applications to DNR for aquatic use authorizations and easements.

Government Advisory Team Agencies and Tribes:

- Chehalis Tribe
- Quinault Indian Nation
- Ecology
- WSDOT
- NMFS
- USACE
- USFWS
- DAHP
- WDFW
- DNR
- Federal Highway Administration
- Washington State Conservation Commission
- Washington State Department of Agriculture
- Washington State Department of Commerce

6.5.6 Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Information from DAHP staff and the historic property database were used in the preparation of the EIS. This information helped to identify areas with potential for historic properties and archaeological resources within the Chehalis Basin. Because this EIS is programmatic and specific project details are not known at this time, additional cultural review and consultation will be undertaken as part of the environmental review for specific projects that are implemented. These reviews will include site-specific cultural resource studies, and determinations of potential impacts and appropriate mitigation in coordination with DAHP, tribes, and other interested parties.

6.5.7 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Because WDFW manages state fish, wildlife, and ecosystems within the Chehalis Basin, Ecology has collaborated with this agency on development of the EIS. Information from WDFW staff was used in the preparation of the EIS, including recent studies regarding aquatic and terrestrial fish, amphibians, and other species use within the Chehalis Basin. Specific input from WDFW was solicited with regard to fish and wildlife. When specific projects are carried forward under the Chehalis Basin Strategy, individual project proponents may need to submit applications to WDFW for Hydraulic Project Approvals.