

FACT SHEET

Project Title

Chehalis Basin Strategy: Reducing Flood Damage and Restoring Aquatic Species Habitat

Brief Description of Proposal

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) prepared this Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the Chehalis Basin Strategy alternatives designed to reduce flood damage and restore aquatic species habitat in the Chehalis Basin in Southwestern Washington. This Final EIS was prepared in compliance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), and Ecology is the lead agency.

The SEPA nonproject action is the adoption of a program called the Chehalis Basin Strategy. The strategy is a program of integrated, long-term, flood damage reduction and aquatic species habitat restoration actions. The EIS evaluates how combinations of actions could function together to meet the dual purpose and need of reducing flood damage and restoring aquatic species habitat. The EIS includes four action alternatives, which are characterized by different combinations of flood damage reduction and aquatic species habitat restoration action elements. Each action alternative includes one or a combination of Large-scale Flood Damage Reduction Actions (i.e., Flood Retention Facility, Airport Levee Improvements, I-5 Projects, Aberdeen/Hoquiam North Shore Levee, and Restorative Flood Protection). All action alternatives include the same Local-scale Flood Damage Reduction Actions (i.e., Floodproofing, Local Projects, Land Use Management, and Flood Warning System Improvements) and Aquatic Species Habitat Actions (both low and high scenarios). In addition, a No Action Alternative is included, which is intended to represent the most likely future expected in the absence of implementing an action alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, actions to reduce flood damage and improve aquatic habitat conditions would continue to a lesser extent than in the action alternatives, and in a piecemeal fashion.

Contact

Gordon White, SEPA Responsible Official
Program Manager, Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, Washington 98503
(360) 407-6977
gordon.white@ecy.wa.gov

Permits, Licenses, and Approvals Required

Numerous regulations, plans, laws, and treaty obligations guided or influenced the development of this EIS. Because this is a programmatic EIS for a nonproject action, and the specific nature of projects that would be proposed under the Chehalis Basin Strategy is not yet known, it is not possible to present a complete list of permits, licenses, and approvals that could be required for the components of the strategy.

Implementation of the alternatives in the EIS would require compliance with regulations and plans at federal, state, and local levels. To implement the action alternatives or their action elements, the lead agency and project proponent would need to comply with applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. Examples of those commonly associated with flood damage reduction and aquatic species habitat restoration actions, which may apply, are as follows:

- State Environmental Policy Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Endangered Species Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- Section 10, Rivers and Harbors Act
- Sections 401, 402, and 404, Clean Water Act
- Washington Coastal Zone Management Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
- National Forest Management Act
- Federal Emergency Management Agency Guidelines for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping
- Executive Order 11988: Floodplain Management
- Washington State Hydraulic Code
- Washington State Shoreline Management Act
- Governor's Executive Order 05-05: Archeological and Cultural Resources
- Washington Forest Practices Act
- Washington State Growth Management Act
- Aquatic Use Authorization or Leases
- Water Right Permit
- Reservoir Permit
- Dam Safety Construction Permit
- Sand and Gravel General Permit
- Construction Stormwater General Permit
- Land Clearing Burning Permit
- Grading Permit

- Building Permit
- Railroad right-of-way use/permits
- Local floodplain management ordinances
- Local critical areas codes, zoning ordinances, and other land use requirements

Authors and Contributors

A list of the individuals from Ecology, other state agencies, tribes, and consulting firms who participated in the EIS evaluation is provided in Chapter 8.

Date of Draft Environmental Impact Statement Issuance

September 29, 2016

Date of Addendum to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

October 17, 2016

Date Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comments Were Due

The Draft EIS was originally available for public review and comment until October 31, 2016; however, an extension was granted to extend the review and comment period through November 14, 2016.

Date and Place of Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Meetings

Two public hearings were held during the comment period. The first public hearing was held on October 18, 2016, at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Chehalis, and the second public hearing was held on October 27, 2016, at Montesano City Hall in Montesano.

Date of Final Environmental Impact Statement Issuance

June 2, 2017

Timing of Additional Environmental Review

The analysis in this EIS is programmatic in nature and has been prepared to disclose probable significant adverse impacts associated with the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Any individual actions that are carried forward will require additional, more detailed, project-level environmental review prior to implementation. These projects and actions could require SEPA compliance, National Environmental Policy Act compliance, or both, depending on the implementing agency, source of funding, and/or types of permits required. If a decision is made to implement the Chehalis Basin Strategy, some projects and actions could be advanced and ready for additional environmental review in 2017; others could require several years before they would be advanced for implementation.

Document Availability

The Final EIS for the Chehalis Basin Strategy is available online at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/chehalisbasin.html>. Print copies or CDs of the document may be obtained by written request to the EIS Project Manager, Chrissy Bailey, at chrissy.bailey@ecy.wa.gov, or by calling (360) 407-6781. Print copies of the Final EIS may require payment of a fee (copying costs plus allowed mailing cost). Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service, including TTY service. Persons with a disability can call 1-866-833-6341 to access a Communications Assistant with Washington's Speech-to-Speech service.

Location of Background Materials

During the past several years, Ecology has worked in coordination with local governments, other agencies, and community leaders to study the Chehalis Basin. The agency has collaborated with residents, stakeholders, and other agencies to identify potential solutions that will reduce flood damage and restore aquatic species habitat. The EIS builds off this completed work. Background materials used in the preparation of the EIS are available online through the following links:

- <http://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/publications/>
- <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/chehalisbasin.html>
- <http://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/projects/current-projects/chehalisfloodingfish/>