



# Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Proposed Project

## SEPA EIS Update for Chehalis Basin Board

September 5, 2019

# SEPA EIS Update

- The SEPA EIS is **on track** for the release of a draft document on **February 27, 2020** for public review and comment.
- Ecology continues to coordinate with multiple state agencies in their areas of expertise and for reviews of draft EIS documents.
- Ecology meets regularly with the Corps to ensure consistency in data and methods, as appropriate.
- Ecology continues to meet with the Flood Control Zone District on the EIS process and as needed for clarification on their proposed project.

# What the SEPA EIS Will Do

- Provide information to the public and decision-makers for review, comment, and use.
- Identify probable, significant, adverse environmental impacts from the proposed project.
- Evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, including a No Action Alternative.
- Describe methods used for analysis.
- Identify measures that would avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse impacts at a high level (more design, analysis, and modeling will be needed for the specific mitigation included in permits).

# What the SEPA EIS Will Not Do

- It will not approve or deny the proposed project.
- It will not include a cost-benefit analysis.
- It will not include site-specific, detailed mitigation – that will be part of the permitting processes as required by their regulatory authority. For permits, more detailed engineering and design information is usually required which affects the specific mitigation measures required in permits.
- It will not answer every question in every area – other documents are expected to be used and considered by decision-makers.

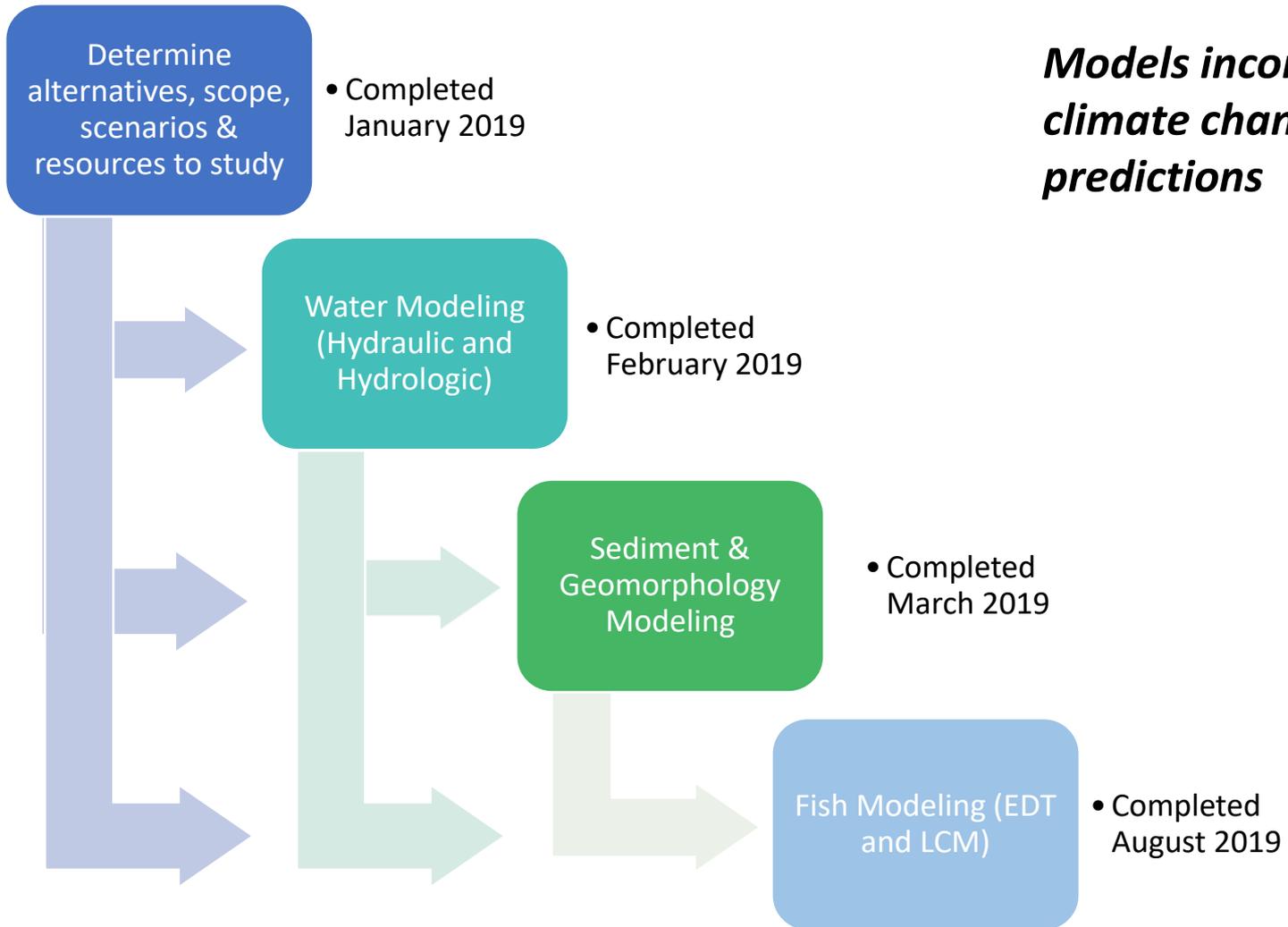
# Geographic Scope of SEPA EIS

- The geographic scope of study is based on where probable, significant environmental impacts from the proposed project could occur.
- Water models were used to identify the general area of potential impact and included climate change predictions.
- In general, the EIS is analyzing:
  - Site of the flood retention facility near Pe Ell
  - Site of Chehalis-Centralia Airport Levee
  - Upriver and in the temporary reservoir area
  - Downriver to where flooding effects were modeled for a catastrophic flood event
- The study will look at the entire life-cycle of salmon and impacts that could affect southern resident killer whales.

# SEPA EIS Alternatives

- The SEPA EIS analyzes:
  - 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.
- The Local Actions alternative is based on local-scale and nonstructural efforts to reduce damage and improve floodplain storage to retain or slow down flood waters.
  - It includes: local land use management, buyout of at-risk properties, floodproofing, restoration, afforestation, channel migration protection, and flood warning systems.
  - It does not include the flood retention facility or levee changes.

# SEPA EIS Process - Modeling



***Models incorporate climate change predictions***

# Salmon and Steelhead Modeling

- Salmon and steelhead models being used:
  - Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) model
  - Life-Cycle Model (LCM) component of the NOAA Model
- The models were integrated to identify impacts to salmon and steelhead from flood events over time
  - EDT evaluates changes in habitat potential for specific conditions at a given time
  - LCM uses the EDT outputs and evaluates populations under different flood conditions over time
- Decisions and assumptions for the model will be clearly identified in the EIS for review and comment.

# SEPA EIS Process – Discipline Report Development

- Discipline Reports provide detailed, technical data and analysis.
- They will be appendices in the draft EIS.
- Discipline Report development includes:
  - Scoping Comments
  - 2017 Chehalis Basin Strategy Programmatic EIS
  - Modeling assumptions, inputs, and outputs
  - WDFW, DNR, and WSDOT Studies
  - Reports prepared for Chehalis Basin Strategy work

# SEPA EIS Process – Initial Reviews of Discipline Reports

**All initial reviews of Discipline Reports are completed.**

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Earth
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Environmental Justice
- Fish Species and Habitats
- Land Use
- Noise
- Public Services and Utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Resources
- Visual
- Water
- Wetlands
- Wildlife Species and Habitat

# SEPA EIS Process – Draft EIS Development

- The technical Discipline Reports will be used to develop the draft EIS sections.
- The draft EIS language will be less technical and more reader friendly.
- Through the end of 2019, work includes:
  - Complete reviews of the Discipline Reports
  - Develop the EIS sections
  - Finalize decisions on impacts and significance

# SEPA EIS Process – Prepare Draft EIS for release

In late 2019/ early 2020, we will:

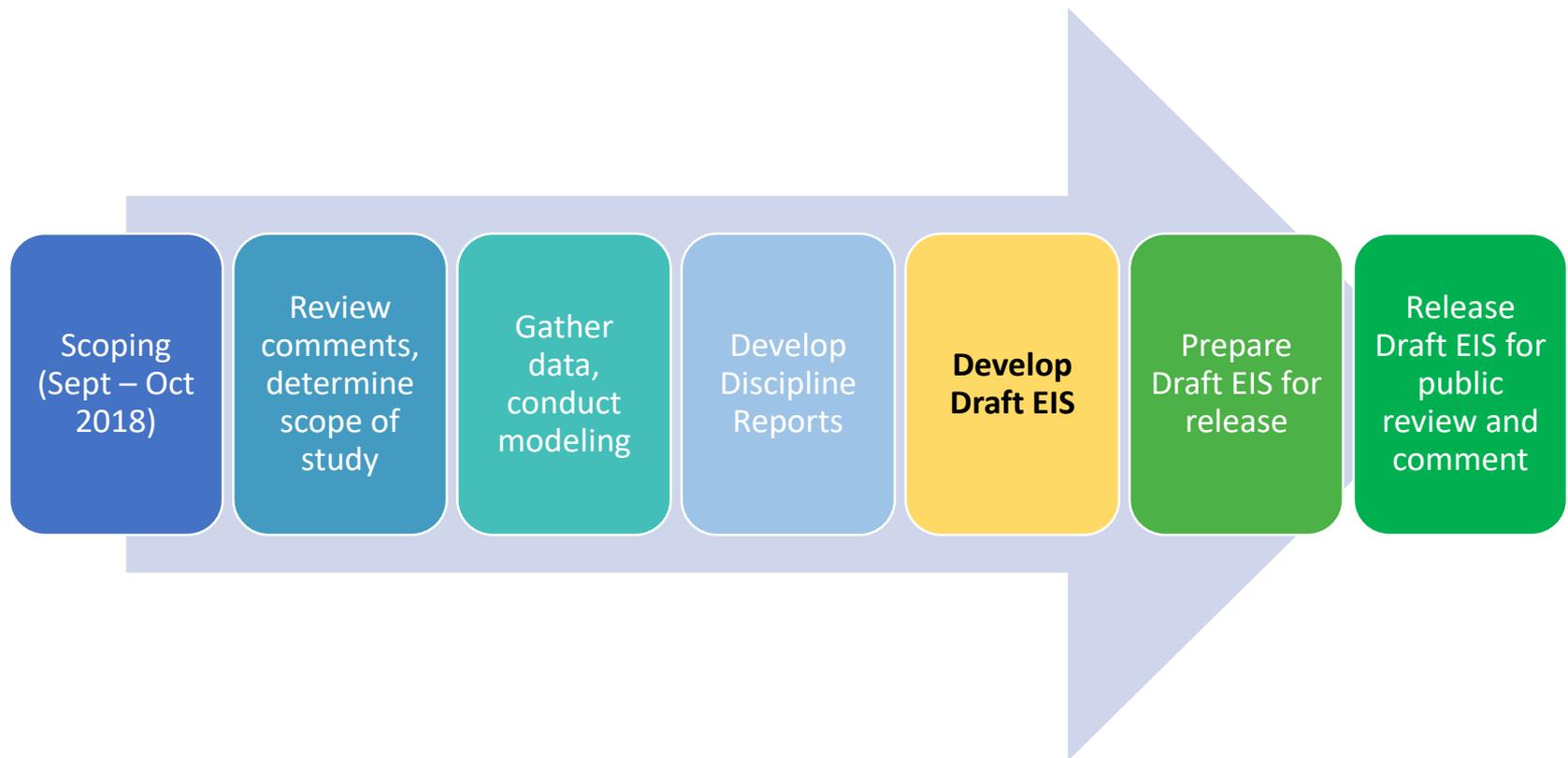
- Format and prepare document for release
- QA/QC all documents
- Prepare the outreach plan
- Prepare for the public comment period
- Prepare for public hearing(s)

**The SEPA Draft EIS is planned for release on February 27, 2020 for review and comment**

# Overview of Draft SEPA EIS Timeline

Fall 2018 | 2019

| 2020 February



# Messages for Stakeholders

- The draft state Environmental Impact Statement is expected to be released on February 27, 2020 for review and comment.
- Ecology's goal for the draft SEPA EIS is to be an objective, thorough, and science-based document.
  - It will provide information for the public and decision-makers about the probable, significant, adverse environmental impacts from the proposed project.
  - It will not approve or deny the proposed project.
- Ecology is looking forward to hearing your comments on the draft environmental review. Please sign up for email updates.

# Where to Find Information

Information about the SEPA EIS is available at:

Chehalis Basin Strategy website

<http://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis/sepa-process/>

Ecology's website

<https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/Our-Programs/Office-of-Chehalis-Basin/EIS> .

You can sign up for the email list from either site to get updates.