

Scoping Questions for the Programmatic EIS

Scoping Process Goals

- 1. Confirm project purpose.** People who live, work, play, or visit near the Chehalis River and its many tributaries know that this area has experienced extreme flooding and drought conditions. These extreme events may become even more frequent in the future in the Chehalis Basin. The Chehalis River itself has also been affected by these events and other human actions, posing a significant threat to fish and other aquatic species. The Chehalis Basin Strategy was developed to provide a safer future for people and a healthier Chehalis River for natural species.
- 2. Confirm project need.** The health of the Chehalis River, the safety of homes and businesses along the river, and the abundance of species that depend on the river are all connected. Actions to reduce damage from flooding and restore habitat often affect the same land and landowners, and require an integrated program to be successful.
- 3. Confirm range of alternatives.** This environmental review will look at different combinations of actions (sometimes called alternatives) that could meet the purpose and need—to reduce damage from floods and improve the health of the Chehalis River. The Chehalis Basin Strategy has identified a number of proposed actions. Questions such as, “Are there other actions that could meet the purpose and need for this project?” and “Should the actions be combined differently?” will help to confirm the breadth of actions to be considered.

Scoping Questions

1. Natural habitat and species actions

The Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (Plan) will study the Chehalis River, the condition of its habitat, and key species that depend on a healthy river and habitat for survival. The results of the Plan will help inform where habitat restoration is needed, what types of habitat are needed, and which species need the most protection (for example, fish, such as native salmon, are declining in number in the Chehalis Basin). Since much of the habitat is on private property, participation in restoration will be voluntary. The needs of landowners will be addressed, as well as the need to improve habitat.

- How do you define a healthy river and healthy aquatic habitat?
- What have you observed about the health of the river?
- What have you observed about the native species present in and along the river (including fish, frogs and other amphibians)?
- Compared to the past, have you observed an increase or decrease in these native species?
- Are there things you would like to see improved in and along the river?

- Do you have any thoughts about which species should be a focus of the Plan?
- Are there any restoration actions you think are working well along the river? If so, describe which ones and where.
- What concerns, and rights of landowners, need to be considered?

2. Flood damage reduction actions

- What should be considered about the potential levees and walls along I-5?
- What should be considered about a potential dam upstream of Pe Ell?
- What local- or small-scale projects should be considered?
- Is there anything else that should be considered to reduce flood damage?

3. Land use

- What changes do you see in how the land is used in the Chehalis Basin?
- What harmful or beneficial practices do you see in parts of the Chehalis Basin that might affect the health of the river or the amount of damage that occurs from extreme flooding?
- What changes should we consider in how land is managed to prevent an increase in damage?

4. Community considerations

The effects of flooding and the deterioration of habitat are costly, on people and on the river's aquatic community.

- How do these effects impact you and your community economically?
- Looking at the actions being studied, will any of these actions, or combinations of actions, financially affect you and your community?
- As these actions are studied, are there specific social or economic effects on you, or your community, that should be examined?

5. Other actions to reduce damage from flooding and restore habitat

- What other options or changes do you think should be considered?
- What else should be considered about reducing damage from flooding and improving the health of the river and its habitat

How can I provide input?

Ecology welcomes your input on what to analyze in the EIS and whether there are other actions to consider. In addition to comments received at the scoping meetings, written comments will be accepted through October 19, 2015.

You can submit written comments to <http://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/comment-form>