



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Seattle District

# Special Public Notice

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
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Public Notice Date: September 28, 2018  
Expiration Date: October 29, 2018  
NWS-2014-1118, Chehalis River Basin Flood  
Control Zone District

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## NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION PROJECT

**PURPOSE:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Seattle District received a permit application from the Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District (applicant) for the construction of a flood retention structure on the upper Chehalis River and the raising of levees at the Centralia-Chehalis Airport. A Department of the Army (DA) permit is required for the project pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The Corps has determined the proposed project may have significant individual and/or cumulative impacts on the human environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4232(2)(c). Preparation of the EIS will support the Corps' eventual decision to either issue, issue with modification or deny the DA permit for the proposed action. The EIS will assess the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the projects and is intended to be sufficient in scope to address Federal, State, and local requirements, environmental and socio-economic issues concerning the proposed action, and permit reviews. The EIS process begins with the publication of this Notice of Intent. The EIS will be prepared according to the Corps' procedures for implementing NEPA, 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 325, Appendix B, and consistent with the Corps' policy to facilitate public understanding and review of agency proposals.

The Corps will serve as the lead federal agency for this EIS pursuant to the requirements of NEPA. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) will serve as the lead agency for the separate EIS pursuant to the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The Corps and Ecology have agreed to participate in joint scoping to simplify the public comment process for the two separate EISs.

The Corps invites participation in the EIS process by affected federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, individuals, and other private interest organization and parties. The Corps published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a federal NEPA EIS in the Federal Register on September 28, 2018 (Fed. Reg. Vol #77).

**COMMENT RESPONSE DATE:** Scoping comments and suggestions must be received no later than October 29,

2018. To be most helpful, comments should clearly describe specific environmental topics or issues which the commentator believes the document should address.

NOTE: All comments received will become part of the administrative record and are subject to public release, as appropriate, in their entirety, including any personally identifiable information such as names, phone numbers, and addresses, if included in the comment.

ADDRESSES: Written comments concerning the project and requests to be included on the EIS notification mailing list should be submitted to:

Anchor QEA, Care of: Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District EIS, 720 Olive Way, Suite 1900, Seattle, Washington 98101.

Written comments regarding the scope of the EIS – including the environmental analysis, range of alternatives, and potential mitigation actions – should be received at this address or submitted by electronically at [www.chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis](http://www.chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis).

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS: Public scoping meetings will be held at the following times and locations:

At Montesano City Hall, Banquet Room, 112 North Main Street, Montesano, Washington 98563 on Tuesday, October 16, 2018 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

At Centralia College, Bowman Rotary Banquet Rooms A and B, 600 Centralia College Boulevard, Centralia, Washington 98531 on Wednesday, October 17, 2018 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

During the scoping period, continuous access to the scoping meeting presentation will be hosted on the EIS website at [www.chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis](http://www.chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis).

Any person requiring a special accommodation (e.g. sign language interpreter, wheelchair accommodations, etc.) for attending a public meeting must file a request with the Corps at the address in the preceding section or by calling (206) 219-5900. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341. Such requests shall need to be received by the Corps at least 72 hours before the meeting is scheduled to start.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Project Description*. The proposal involves the construction of a water retention facility at a site in the Chehalis River (River Mile [RM] 108.5) near the Town of Pe Ell, in Lewis County, Washington and the raising of levees at the Centralia-Chehalis Airport in the City of Chehalis, Lewis County, Washington (see *Vicinity Map, Figure 1*) to reduce damage from major flood events in the Chehalis Basin.

The applicant, funded by the Washington State capitol budget, is proposing construction of a flood retention expandable (FRE) facility and associated infrastructure on the main-stem Chehalis River south of the Town of Pe Ell. The facility would have capacity to provide 65,000 acre-feet of temporary flood storage during major floods; the Chehalis River would flow normally during regular conditions or small flood events. The top of the dam

structure would be 1,220 feet long with a maximum structural height of up to 254 feet including 3 to 5 feet of freeboard for safety. The FRE facility is proposed to include a 210-foot-wide emergency spillway, discharging into a 70-foot-wide and 230-foot-long stilling basin. See *Figure 2* and *Figure 3*.

The FRE facility would be constructed with a foundation and hydraulic structure extents capable of supporting future construction of a larger dam with up to 130,000 acre feet of storage. An expansion of the facility would be subject to a separate NEPA and SEPA process and permitting if proposed.

Construction of the flood retention structure would include the installation of a temporary diversion tunnel to accommodate fish passage during construction. Permanent fish passage would be accomplished primarily through five openings installed along the river bottom at the base of the flood retention structure. The openings would be 230 feet in length. They are anticipated to replicate the stream discharge and velocity rating curves exhibited by the natural channel at the dam site (through which fish currently pass without the dam), up through river discharges of 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). When water is impounded behind the dam during high-flow events, the low-level outlet would be closed. Fish passage would be provided via a collection, handling, transport, and release (CHTR) facility during the high-flow, short-term periods of time when the dam outlets are closed.

The applicant also proposes to raise the elevation of the Centralia-Chehalis Airport levee in Chehalis, Washington. The existing 9,511-foot-long-levee would be raised 4 to 7 feet, along with raising Airport Road 1,700 feet along the southern extent of the airport. See *Figure 4*.

Potential impacts of the proposal have not been determined at this time. Mitigation for proposed unavoidable impacts to waters of the U.S. will be required to comply with the Corps' 2008 Mitigation Rule and public interest review (33 CFR 320.4).

A full project description as provided by the applicant can be accessed electrically at [www.chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis](http://www.chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis).

*Permit authority.* The proposed Chehalis River Basis Flood Damage Reduction Project would involve discharge of fill into water of the U.S. Therefore, the proposed project would require an issuance of a DA permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344).

*Alternatives.* The EIS will address an array of alternatives for providing alternatives suitable for reducing flood damage within the Chehalis River Basin, including a no action alternative. Mitigation measures may include, but are not limited to, avoidance of sensitive areas and creation, restoration, or enhancement of wetlands.

*Potentially significant issues.* Potentially significant issues to be analyzed in the EIS may include, but are not limited to, project-specific and cumulative effects on water resources; cultural, historic, and archaeological resources; geomorphology; geology including landslides and earthquakes; wetland and riparian habitat and wildlife; climate change; transportation; recreation; land use; Tribal resources, including Tribal treaty rights; environmental health and safety, and public services and utilities.

*Cooperating agencies.* The Corps has invited the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Chehalis Tribe, and the Quinault Indian Nation to serve as cooperating agencies under NEPA.

*Additional consultations.* The Corps will consult with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer and applicable Tribes to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act; and applicable Tribes to comply with treaty provisions.

*Permitting process.* The decision whether to issue a DA permit will be based on an evaluation of the potential impacts, including direct, indirect, and/or cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably can be expected to accrue from the proposals must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. For the discharge of fill into special aquatic sites (wetlands), evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230). Development of the EIS will assist the Corps in determining whether to issue a DA permit, issue a DA permit with special conditions, or deny a DA permit.

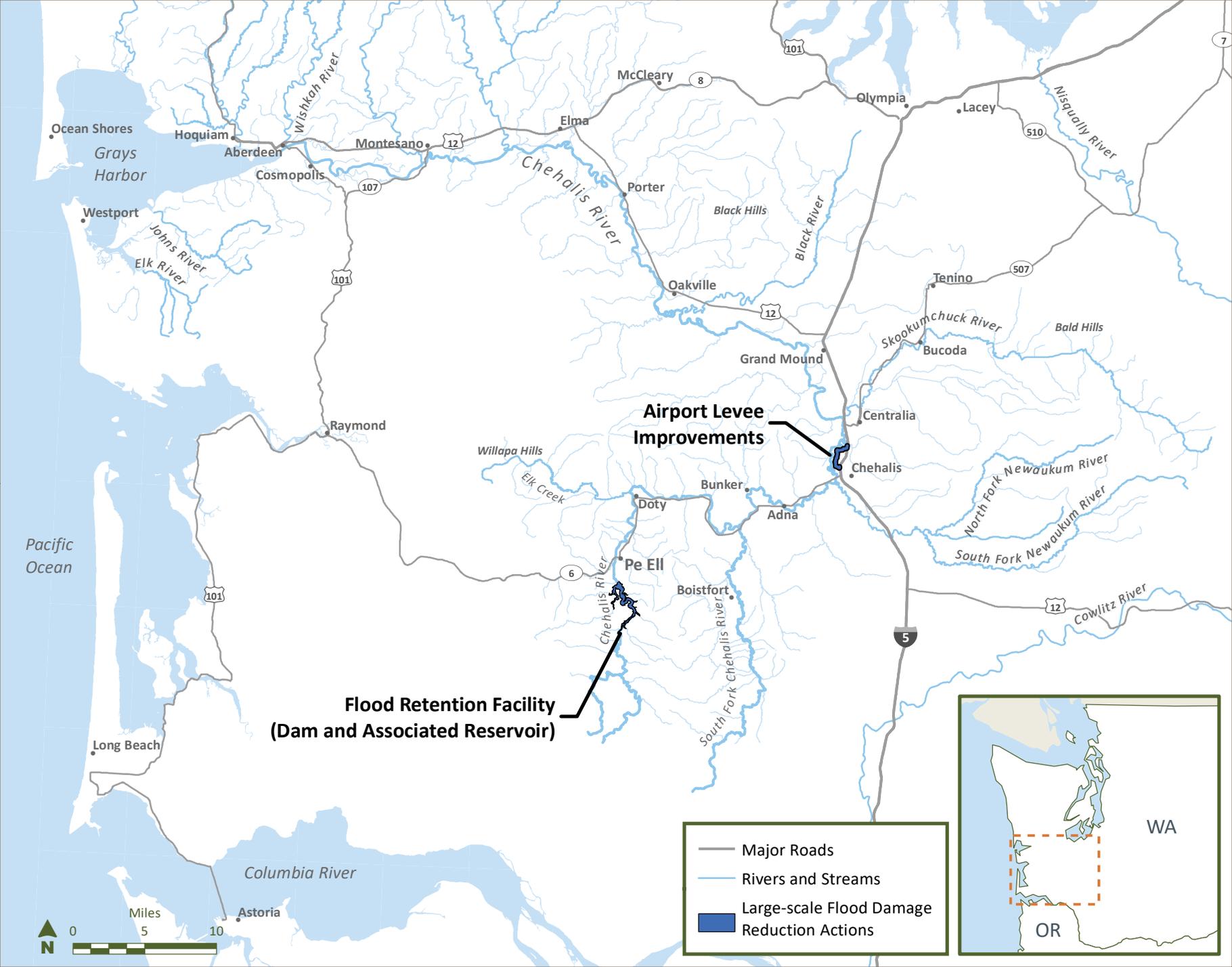
ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

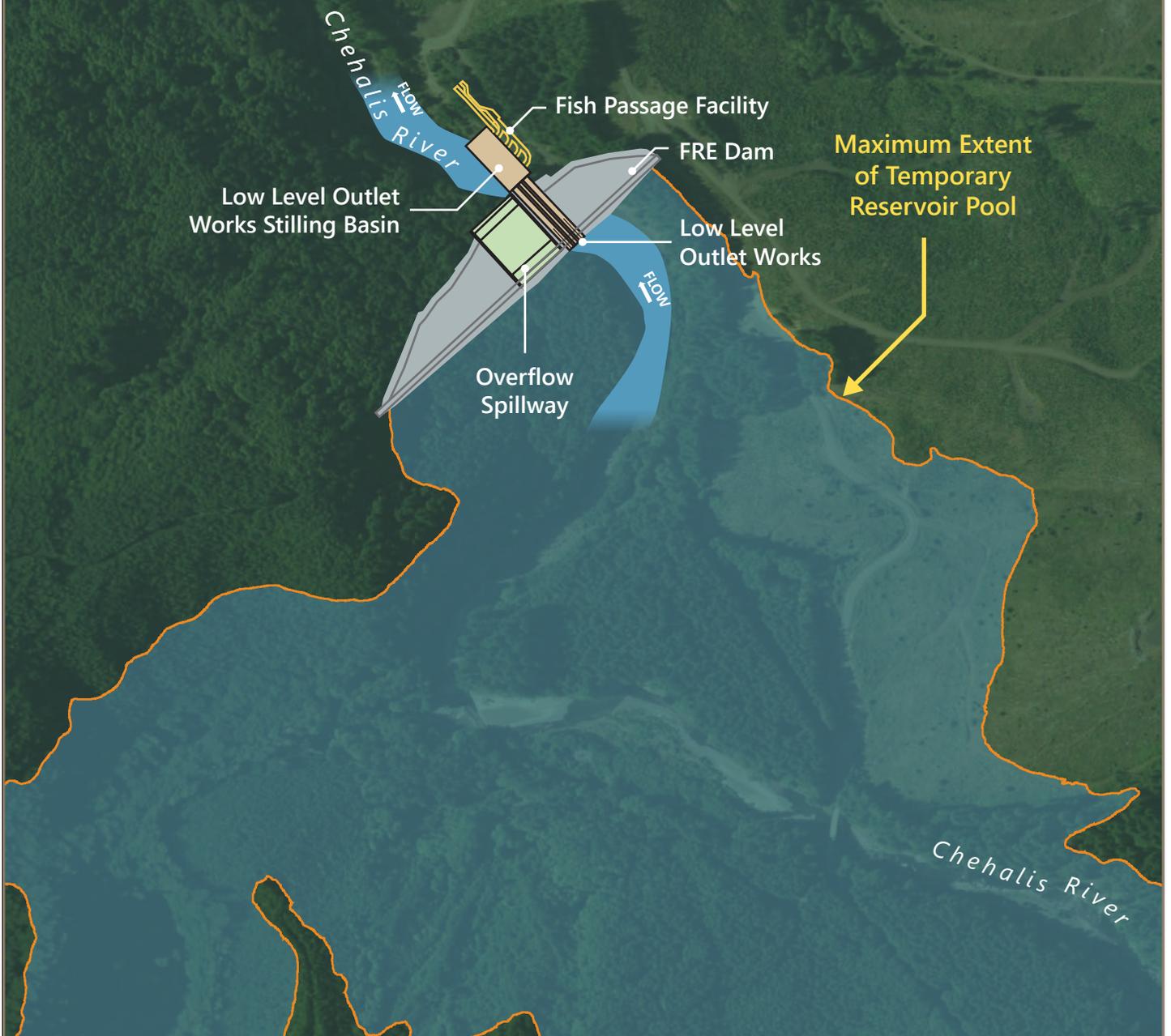
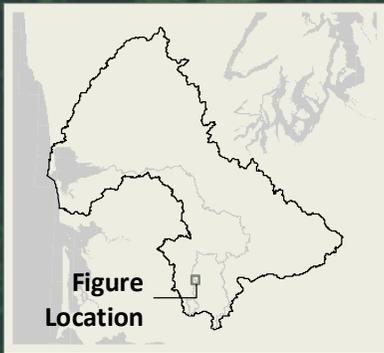
Figure 2 – Proposed FRE Overview

Figure 3 – Proposed Temporary Reservoir Overview

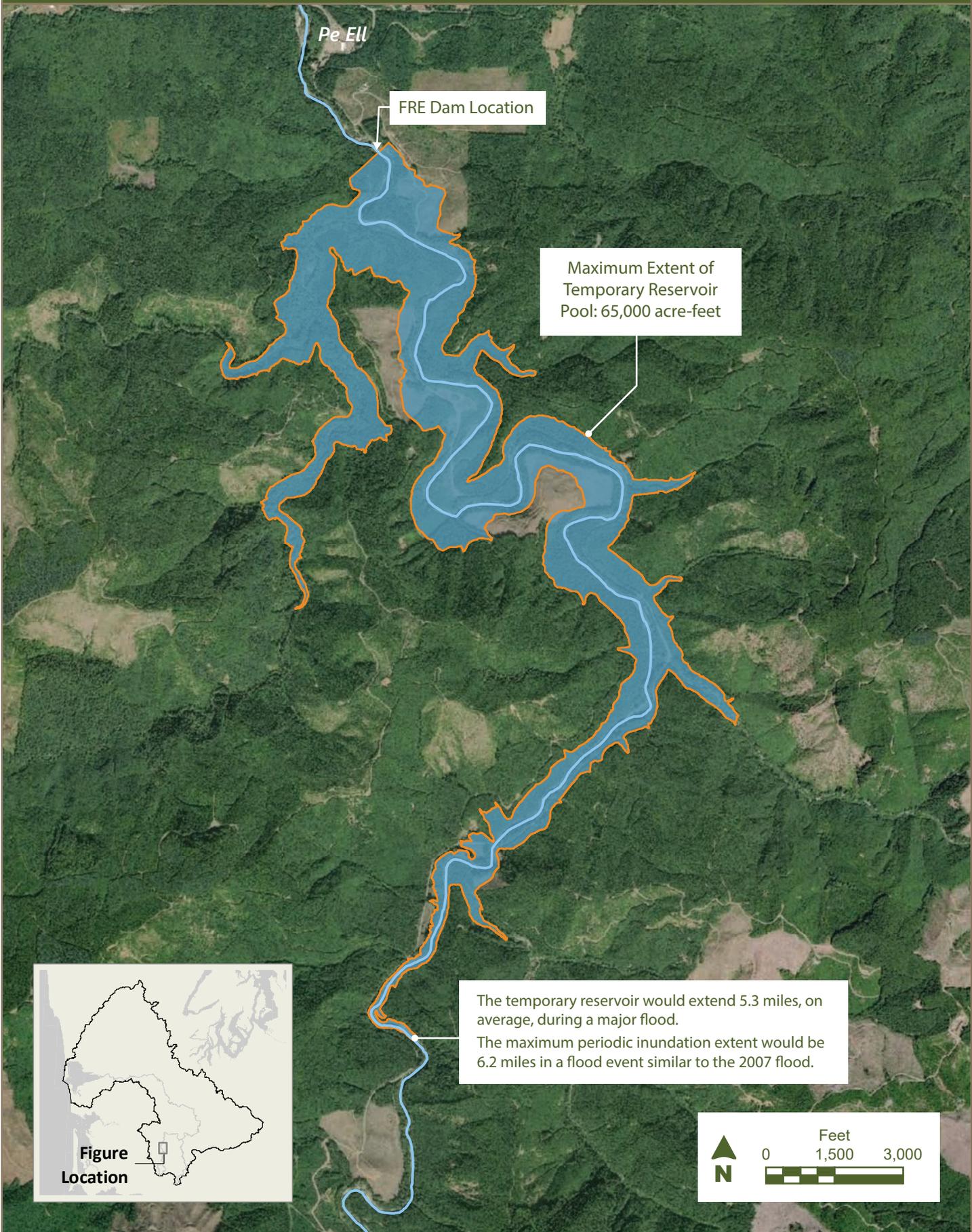
Figure 4 – Proposed Levee Raising Overview



# FRE Dam Plan



FRE Maximum Temporary Reservoir Extent



# Airport Levee Improvements

## Airport Levee Improvements

— Airport Levee Improvements

== Raised Road

## Existing

++ Railroad

