

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE (DS) AND REQUEST FOR COMMENT ON THE SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

Name of Proposal: Eightmile Dam Rebuild and Restoration Project

Project Proponent: Icicle and Peshastin Irrigation Districts (IPID)

Location: Eightmile Dam is located in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, approximately 15 miles west of Leavenworth, WA. The site is accessible via an approximately 3-mile pedestrian trail. The trailhead is located on Forest Service Road 7601 accessible via Icicle Road, within Township 24N, Range 16E WM, Section 33.

Description: The existing dam was constructed in the 1920s. The dam is owned and operated by IPID. The dam was damaged more than 25 years ago when the spillway was overtopped and the earthen embankment eroded, limiting IPID's ability to refill the lake to the historical spillway elevation, and resulting in increased potential for additional erosion and failure.

Additionally, the Jack Creek Fire in 2017 burned trees and vegetation in the Eightmile Lake basin that led to unstable conditions and the potential for high run-off or flash flooding, adding to the risk of dam failure. In 2018, Washington Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Dam Safety office (DSO) worked with IPID and Chelan County to temporarily repair the dam and address the immediate threat of dam failure. The repairs do not meet current dam safety requirements and those requirements necessitate rebuilding the dam.

IPID proposes to rebuild and restore Eightmile Dam to meet the following objectives:

- Restore the storage capacity of Eightmile Lake to meet IPID irrigation and storage needs;
- Comply with DSO regulations for a high hazard dam;
- Provide water to enhance Icicle Creek instream flows and allow for potential mitigation of new beneficial uses.

IPID has developed design alternatives for rebuilding the dam with guidance from the DSO.

EIS Required: The project-level EIS is part of a phased review process under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), following the 2019 Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Icicle Strategy issued by Ecology and Chelan County. The Eightmile Dam project is one of several early actions to be implemented as part of the Icicle Creek Strategy, under the direction of the Icicle Work Group. The project proponent is IPID. Ecology's Office of Columbia River (OCR) will act as the lead agency for the project-level EIS and has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment, and accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.21C.030(2)(c). The EIS will include a range of reasonable alternatives and will evaluate probable significant adverse impacts. The lead agency has identified the following action alternatives for evaluation in the EIS:

- Narrow Spillway with Gates
- Wide Spillway without Gates

Both alternatives would have a low-level outlet pipe located entirely within the area delineated by IPID's Special Warranty Deed with the US Forest Service.

Two methods for construction access will be evaluated including:

- Helicopter transport
- Overland vehicle transport

Non-motorized wilderness ground transport (i.e., pack equipment and materials in and out using humans and pack animals, no use of motorized equipment) could be used to supplement either transport option.

As required by SEPA, the EIS will evaluate a No Action Alternative. This alternative has been developed to serve as the baseline condition for comparison with the action alternatives, and to describe impacts if the proposed project is not constructed.

Additional information is available on the project website at <https://ecology.wa.gov/eightmile>.

EIS Scoping and Public Comment: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, probable significant adverse impacts, mitigation measures, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. An expanded scoping process is being provided pursuant to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 197-11-410, and will include two public scoping meetings. Due to COVID-19, these meetings will be held virtually.

Virtual Public Scoping Meeting Dates, Times, and Virtual Details

Wednesday January 13, 2021 3:00 - 6:00 PM

https://rossstrategic.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aK5AI9EcRFO9asD4_wpqPw

Thursday January 21, 2021, 5:00 -8:00 PM

https://rossstrategic.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BiYXfsmrQ-erYHgAFd6qnv

Scoping and Comment Period: The comment period opens Friday December 18, 2020. The deadline for submitting your comments is Monday February 1, 2021. All comments related to project scoping must be submitted by this date. Comments may be submitted orally at the virtual scoping meetings or in writing.

Written comments may be submitted

Online at <https://ecology.wa.gov/eightmile>

By mail to:

Department of Ecology
Central Regional Office
Attn: Melissa Downes
1250 West Alder Street
Union Gap, WA 98903

Project-related information can be reviewed on the project website at: <https://ecology.wa.gov/eightmile>

For questions about the project, or the scoping process, please email: melissa.downes@ecy.wa.gov

Date of Issue: December 18, 2020