



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Walla Walla District

JACKSON HOLE FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SNAKE & GROS VENTRE RIVERS • WYOMING

The Jackson Hole Flood Protection Project (project) is located on the Snake and Gros Ventre Rivers near Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The federal project was authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 1950. Originally, Teton County bore the responsibility for operations and maintenance (O&M) of the project until Section 840 of the 1986 Water Resources Development Act designated that the Secretary of the Army have responsibility for O&M of the project, and that Teton County provide for certain cost-sharing requirements.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (Corps), initiated engineering, hydraulic, environmental and economic studies of the levee system to determine an appropriate course of action for implementing the Congressional direction. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Corps analyzed the potential environmental effects of anticipated project O&M in the 1990 Jackson Hole, Wyoming Flood Protection Project O&M Decision Document and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Corps signed a Record of Decision in August of 1990 which documented the decision to assume O&M.

Currently, the Corps is proposing to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to the 1990 EIS, because project operations have changed over time, and there are new circumstances and information relevant to changing procedures and environmental conditions. Specifically, several potentially considerable environmental effects (amongst others) of O&M actions that will be analyzed are:

- Clean Water Act (CWA) and Executive Order 11990 compliance relative to wetlands: Wetland impacts from construction of the entire project is considered significant in the 1990 EIS and remains unmitigated. Planned action to clear vegetation on the landward side of levees and within 15 feet of the levee toe will impact additional wetlands. CWA compliance and mitigation is implemented in a different way since the early 1990's. The regulatory framework is more stringent today.
- Endangered Species Act (ESA): The yellow-billed cuckoo was listed under the ESA in 2014 and is a riparian obligate species. The levees are in the riparian zone and trees and willows along them could be contributing habitat. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided data that indicated the potential for cuckoos to nest in the Project area. O&M activities could have an effect on these species and their habitat.
- Cumulative Effects: A required cumulative effects analysis was not included in the 1990 EIS. Given the potential for direct and indirect effects, as well as known wetland and riparian impacts from the establishment of the levee system, there is a strong likelihood for cumulative effects to wetlands, riparian habitat, and riparian obligate species.
- Cultural Resources: The existing programmatic agreement between the Corps and the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (WY SHPO) is relatively ambiguous in the description where O&M activities can be conducted without a standard Section 106 review under the National Historic Preservation Act. The SEA will substantiate the Corps interpretation's that the agreement with the WY SHPO includes all O&M activities located within the easement boundary and are addressed. Furthermore, the Corps intends to obtain cultural resource data extending beyond the easement boundary; which will allow for quicker and cost-effective Cultural Resources reviews if any O&M activity occurs outside an easement area.

For more information and to participate in public scoping for the SEA (April 20 - May 22, 2017), go online to <http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/EnvironmentalComplianceComment/>.