

## **DRAFT**

### **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT CONFLUENCE PROJECT LISTENING CIRCLE LEASE CHIEF TIMOTHY PARK ASOTIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

The Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers (Corps) proposes to issue a park and recreation non-standard lease for up to 25 years to the Confluence Project for installation of an artwork project on Silcott Island within Chief Timothy Park. The park is owned by the Corps and is located on the Snake River at River Mile 131, about 6 miles west of Clarkston, Washington. The lease would authorize the construction and maintenance of an artwork comprised of an amphitheater entitled a “Listening Circle”, which would be one in a series of art installations constructed by the Confluence Project in the Lower Columbia Basin. The Corps may also issue an easement for up to 25 years to use existing roads and trails to access the artwork site. The Confluence Project has requested the use of the Chief Timothy Park site for this project as the site is near the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers and is on public land in Washington state, a requirement of the state for some of the funding for the project.

The purpose of issuing the lease is to enhance the recreation experience of visitors to Chief Timothy Park through the creation of a new activity area and attraction. Issuing a lease for the Listening Circle would assist the Corps with meeting a portion of its mission to foster outdoor recreation. The project would interpret the area’s ecology and history and encourage visitors to reflect on the changes that have occurred since the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through the area.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) considered two alternatives: (1) No Action; and (2) Issue a Lease. The Corps identified alternative 2 as its proposed action/preferred alternative. Under this alternative, the Corps would issue a lease to the Confluence Project for construction and maintenance of the Listening Circle.

The EA identified effects from construction and from operation/maintenance of the artwork, and determined none of the effects would be considered significant. Construction of the artwork would involve hauling in about 70-82 dump truck loads of clean fill (gravel and basalt rock) to form the amphitheater. Trucks would use existing roads and the roads would be repaired and resurfaced as needed following construction. Best management practices would be used to control any erosion. Construction would be performed in the fall or early spring when the park is closed to minimize effects on visitors. A small amount of non-native vegetation would be removed, but disturbed areas would be replanted with native plants. There would be no effect on Endangered Species Act-listed species.

The use of the artwork site after construction would have minor or no effects. Increased visitor use may disturb an osprey nest near the main access trail, but the effect would be reduced by installing an alternate nesting platform in area of low visitor use on the opposite end of the island.

Events held at the Listening Circle may exceed the planned capacity of park infrastructure, but these effects would be managed to an acceptable level. The proposed action may have positive effects on socioeconomics. Visitors may come to the site specifically because the artwork is there.

The technical, environmental, and social aspects of issuing the lease to the Confluence Group were evaluated in the project EA. Coordination with Federal, state, and local agencies, Indian Tribes, and interested public was accomplished through a public comment period. Based on the information provided by the public and in the EA, I find that approving the Confluence Project's request for a lease for construction and maintenance of a Listening Circle would not result in significant environmental impacts and that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Andrew D. Kelly  
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Commander