

# **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESEMENT (EA) AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

## **PASCO WATER INTAKE FACILITY**

### **PASCO, WASHINGTON**

#### **I. Introduction/Proposed Action**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (Corps) proposes to issue an easement to the City of Pasco (City) for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a water intake facility located (in part) on Corps-managed federal land at approximately Columbia River Mile 336.3. The City is proposing to build a new water intake facility adjacent to its existing I-182 intake facility. Construction of the new water intake facility would assist the City in meeting its current and projected demands for both potable and irrigation water.

#### **II. Background Information**

Starting in the early 2000s, Pasco became one of the fastest growing cities in Washington State going from approximately 32,000 people in 2000 to an estimated population of around 65,600 people in 2013. The significant increase in the number of city residents has created the need to ensure a sufficient supply of water to meet both municipal and irrigation demands now and into the future. Population forecast numbers from Pasco's Comprehensive Water System Plan conservatively project 87,000 residents by 2027 and 100,000 residents by 2030. Pasco's two existing water intake facilities are now operating at maximum capacity and unable to meet Pasco's current and projected water needs.

#### **III. Statement of Purpose and Need**

The Corps proposes to issue an easement to the City to build a water intake facility adjacent to the existing I-182 intake facility located immediately upstream of the I-182 bridge on the north shore of the Columbia River. The purpose of the water intake facility is to provide the City with a sufficient supply of potable (and if needed, irrigation) water to meet current and future demands. The proposed water intake project will help meet the City's growing infrastructure needs.

#### **IV. Project Alternatives**

The following alternatives were identified and considered for this project.

**Alternative 1 (No Action (No Change) Alternative):** Under this alternative, a new water intake facility would not be constructed. The City would continue to obtain potable and irrigation water from its two existing water intake facilities. However, since both facilities are now operating at maximum capacity and the city's population is continuing to grow, water shortages have already occurred in some instances. While the "no action" alternative does not meet the project purpose and need requirements, under Council on Environmental Quality guidelines it serves as the project baseline for environmental conditions and therefore was carried forward for analysis.

**Alternative 2 (Proposed Alternative) – New Water Intake Facility:** This alternative includes the following features – a 30 foot diameter wet well, T-shaped screened water intake and intake pipe, 2000 square foot pump station building designed to resemble a residential structure (zoning code requirements) and ancillary pipe running to the West Pasco Water Treatment Plant.

**Alternative Considered but Removed from Further Consideration:**

Upgrade/Enlarge Existing Water Intake Facilities: Upgrade both of Pasco's existing water intake facilities to meet current and future water needs (i.e. potable and irrigation).

**V. Environmental Effects:** The following environmental resources were identified as being relevant to the project – water quality; noise; cultural resources; vegetation, wetlands, biology (wildlife, fish and aquatic resources); aesthetics, geology and soils; traffic, environmental justice; air quality; and climate change. Environmental analysis and consequences (i.e. effects) of the preferred and "no action" alternatives are detailed in the project EA. The EA analysis concluded there would be no significant impacts to the environment resulting from implementation of the preferred alternative.

The District determined the proposed project "**may affect and is likely to adversely affect**" Upper Columbia River spring Chinook and steelhead as well as Middle Columbia River steelhead. The project is also "**likely to adversely affect**" critical habitat for these species based on the small area of rearing habitat that would be affected. The Corps has determined the project "**may affect, and is likely to adversely affect**" bull trout and it "**may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect**" bull trout designated critical habitat. The Corps has also determined there will be "**no effect**" on any of the ESA-listed terrestrial species including pygmy rabbit, gray wolf, Ute ladies'-tresses, yellow-billed cuckoo, and White Bluffs bladderpod. Likewise, there will be "**no effect**" on Washington ground squirrel.

The Corps has entered into consultation on the project with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

However, consultation will not be completed until after the public review period for this EA is done. The results would be included in the final, signed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) should it be determined an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for this project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle Regulatory Office authorized the proposed in-water work under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 12 – Utility Line Activities. Work must be performed in accordance with NWP 12 Terms and Conditions and the following special condition.

- “In order to meet the requirements of Endangered Species Act (ESA) and/or the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), you must, prior to commencing construction, submit to the Corps, Seattle District, Regulatory Branch, documentation demonstrating that the requirements of ESA, MSA, and NHPA have been met.”

The authorized work complies with the Washington State Department of Ecology’s (Ecology) Water Quality Certification requirements for NWP 12. Seattle Regulatory indicated no further coordination with Ecology was required.

The Corps made a “No Historic Properties Affected” determination under the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process with regard to the proposed undertaking and received Washington State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence. Tribal consultation was conducted with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Wanapum Band. The Colville Tribal Historic Preservation Office concurred with the “No Historic Properties Affected” determination. No other tribal responses were received.

## **VI. Coordination**

The project has been coordinated with the USFWS, NMFS, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington SHPO, Ben-Franklin Transit, Benton-Franklin Health District, Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Transportation District #5, Franklin County Commissioners, Franklin County Public Utility District, Washington State Office of Attorney General (Ecology Division), Washington State Office of Community Development Growth, Pasco School District, Port of Pasco, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Seattle District, CTUIR, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Wanapum Band, .

The project EA was released for a 30-day public comment period. Notice of the proposed project and the opportunity for public review of the EA was published in the Tri-City Herald newspaper. The Corps posted the EA and draft FONSI on its website for viewing. Additional public coordination by Pasco included city council meetings.

## VII. Conclusion/Finding

I have taken into consideration the technical aspects of the project, best scientific information available, public comments, and the information contained in the EA. Additionally, I find that issuance of the easement to the City in support of the water intake project would not result in significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required.

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Timothy R. Vail  
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Commander

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Date