



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WALLA WALLA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
BOISE OUTREACH OFFICE, 720 PARK BOULEVARD, SUITE 255
BOISE, IDAHO 83712

November 19, 2010

Reply to
Attention of:

Planning, Programs and Project
Management Division

Dear Interested Party:

The Walla Walla District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), in cooperation with the Boise River Flood Control District No. 10 (Project Sponsor), requests your input to help identify issues and concerns to be addressed in a Feasibility Report (FR) and Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Boise River at Eagle Island Ecosystem Restoration Project. The objective of the study is to assess the feasibility of ecosystem restoration along the Boise River at and near the head of Eagle Island (River Mile 45) located near the City of Eagle in Ada County, Idaho. The FR and EA will document the study results and evaluate the effects of alternative plans. The study process and documents will be prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other applicable environmental laws and regulations. This project has been initiated under the authority of Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, which allows the Corps to work with non-Federal sponsors to restore a degraded ecosystem.

The goal of the proposed project is to preserve, restore, or improve the biological (aquatic and riparian communities) and physical (floodplain functions, sediment transport, and channel hydraulics) components at and near the head of Eagle Island to a more naturally functioning and self-sustaining condition. The study area includes the Boise River and adjacent lands between the Glenwood Street Bridge and the Eagle Road Bridge. However, restoration alternatives are focused on the reach containing the head of Eagle Island downstream on the North and South Channels, to approximately the west end of the gravel ponds on the island. The enclosed fact sheet shows the project location and provides additional information

The Corps is initiating NEPA scoping and invites all interested Federal, state and local agencies; Tribes; and the public to provide input on issues to address in the FR and EA. Additional project information, including dates and times of future public meetings and the draft FR and the EA, will be posted on the Corps website as the information becomes available (<http://www.nww.usace.army.mil>).

Please submit your comments on the project by December 20, 2010. Written comments can be emailed to the Corps at Boise.Office@usace.army.mil or mailed to Boise Outreach Office, 720 Park Blvd., Suite 255, Boise, Idaho 83712. If you would like to remain on the project contact list, please complete the enclosed form and return to the address listed above or provide the information by email. For more information on the project, please contact Ellen Berggren, Project Manager, at 208-345-2065 or visit the Corps website.

Sincerely,

ACTING
FOR

Gregory S. Graham
Chief, Planning Branch



Boise River at Eagle Island Ecosystem Restoration Project

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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BACKGROUND: The Boise River at Eagle Island Ecosystem Restoration Project is located approximately 15 miles downstream of Lucky Peak Dam where the lower Boise River splits into North and South Channels creating Eagle Island (Figure 1). The project area is located within the floodplain of the Boise River, near the cities of Eagle, Garden City, and Boise, in Ada County, Idaho. The project is focused from the head of Eagle Island, downstream along both the North and South Channels, to approximately the west end of the existing gravel ponds.

The objective of the proposed project is to restore the biological (aquatic and riparian communities) and physical (floodplain functions, sediment transport, and channel hydraulics) components, at and near the head of Eagle Island, to a more naturally functioning and self-sustaining state. This area has been affected by flow regulation, irrigation diversion, flood control projects, gravel mining, and land development encroachment from the 1950s to the present day. The project would also accommodate short and long-term goals and priorities to improve floodplain functions.

SPONSOR: The Boise River Flood Control District #10 (FCD10) is the non-federal sponsor.

STUDY AUTHORITIES: The Corps is conducting the study in accordance with Section 1135 of the Water Resource Development Act of 1986, which authorizes the Corps to modify existing Corps projects to restore the environment or construct new projects to restore areas where Corps projects have contributed to degradation of environmental quality.

STUDY OVERVIEW: The Corps originally initiated the study in 2002. During the 2002 to 2004 time frame, the Corps, working with local stakeholders and the FCD10, conducted baseline studies, including hydraulic studies, and began to identify management measures and alternative plans to address identified water resource problems and planning objectives. Study activities were suspended in February 2005, due to a Corps program funding shortage. The Corps recently received Federal funding to complete the study. Problems initially identified include:

- Riparian and wetland habitat have declined in the lower Boise River as a result of fluctuating water levels from upstream project operations along with continued industrial, commercial and residential development pressures.
- Gravel extraction ponds adjacent to the river channels and the overburden berms formed around these ponds contribute to the fragmentation of the floodplain ecosystem, resulting in decreased floodplain function and loss of natural habitat. These ponds are susceptible to pit capture, which can initiate river channel instability, including bank erosion and in-channel head-cuts.
- Change in geomorphology at the head of the island has caused varying flow distribution between the North and South Channels, resulting in river bank instability and increased flood risk in the South Channel and on Eagle Island. The variable nature of the flow split could mean homes are at flood risk.
- Changes in Boise River channel morphology and varying flow characteristics have resulted in the buildup of gravel at the head of Eagle Island. Heavy equipment has entered the river channel to create push-up dams or to remove the gravel to meet downstream water rights. These maintenance activities result in ecological impacts to the river and adjacent riparian areas.

The Corps and FCD10 are currently conducting a feasibility study to identify alternatives, evaluate the effects of the alternatives, and eventually identify an alternative to address the water resources problems identified.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Ellen Berggren, Project Manager, with questions about the study or visit the Corps website at www.nww.usace.army.mil.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – WALLA WALLA DISTRICT – BOISE OUTREACH OFFICE

720 Park Boulevard, Suite 255; Boise, ID 83712

Boise.Office@usace.army.mil ~ (208) 345-2065

November 2010

General Area

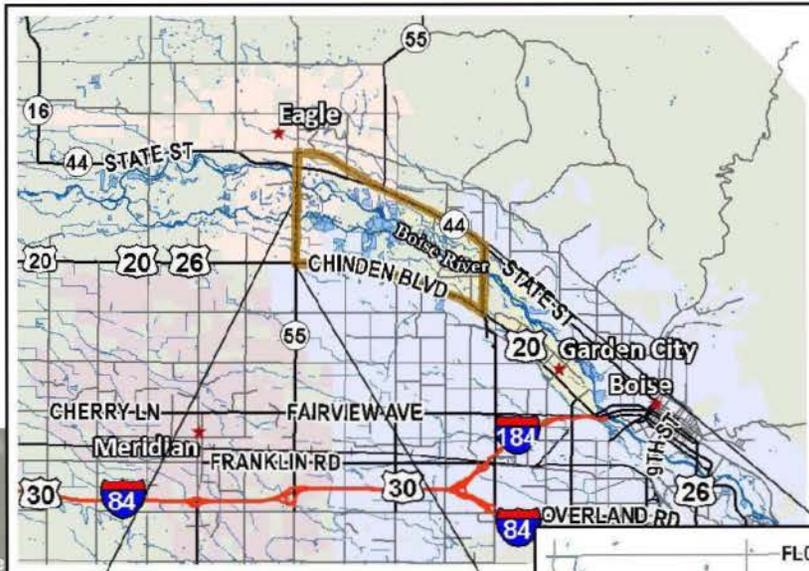
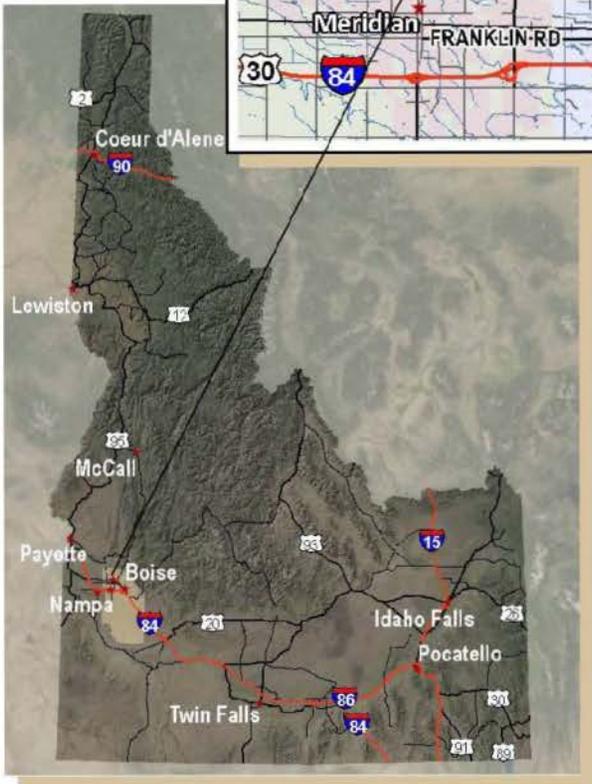
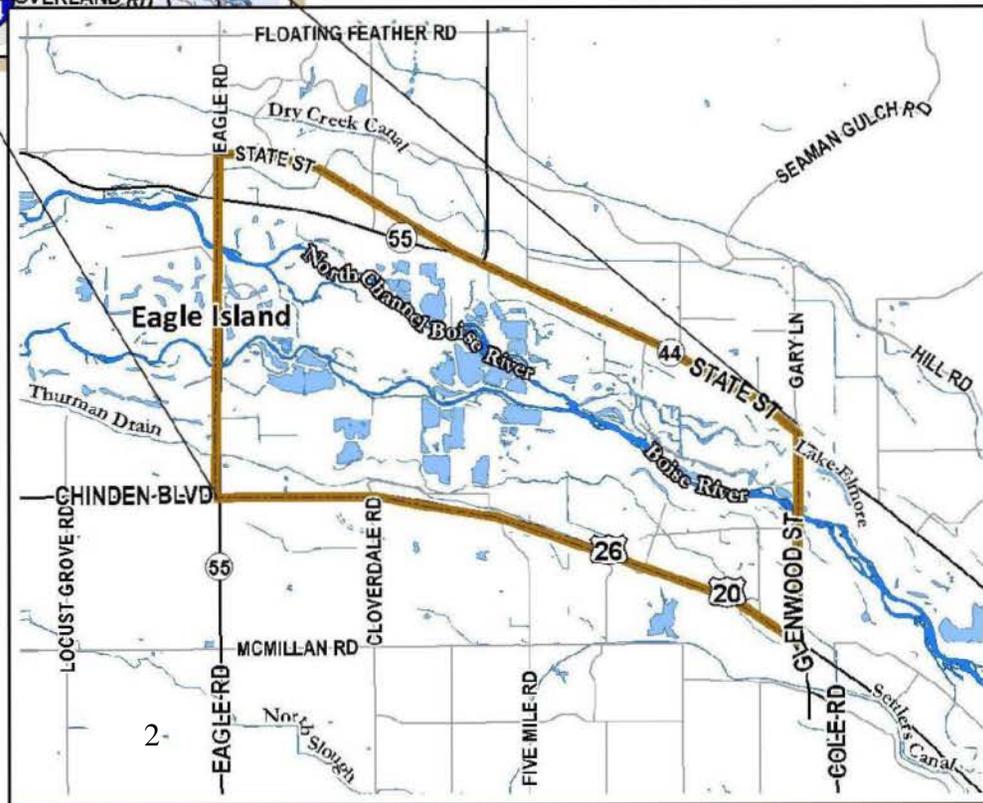


Figure 1. Project Location

Project Vicinity





Boise River at Eagle Island Ecosystem Restoration Project

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•Please add my name to the Boise River at Eagle Island Ecosystem Restoration Project contact list so that I may receive future project updates and notices.

Name

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Email address

Preference for contact (please check one): ___email or ___ mail

Please return to:

Ellen Berggren
Project Manager
Army Corps of Engineers
Boise Outreach Office
720 Park Boulevard, Suite 255
Boise, Idaho 83712