

FINAL

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
PORT OF LEWISTON DOCK EXPANSION AND STORAGE AREA
DEVELOPMENT

The Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers (Corps) proposes to approve use of Corps-owned property by the Port of Lewiston (Port) for expansion of their existing dock and development of a graveled storage area at the existing Port facilities in Lewiston, Idaho. These facilities are located on the right (north) bank of the Clearwater River at River Mile 1.5 at the upstream end of the reservoir formed by the Corps' Lower Granite Dam. This reservoir is part of the Columbia/Snake Inland Waterway that provides for inland waterborne navigation between the Pacific Ocean and Lewiston. The Corps constructed a flood protection levee along the shore as part of the dam project and owns a variable width strip of land along the levee. The Port has an easement from the Corps to use a portion of the land and levee for port and industrial purposes. Under the terms of the easement, the Port must obtain Corps approval before making modifications to the property. Because the Port's proposed project includes modification to an existing Corps structure (the levee), the Corps must also review the Port's project under 33 USC 408 (Section 408). The Corps is also reviewing this project through its Regulatory program and is considering issuing a Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. The Environmental Assessment addresses potential effects associated with proposed action and any reasonable alternatives associated with all of the Corps approval actions.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide the Port with additional dock space for safer and more efficient handling of cargo and to increase the storage area available for cargo and equipment. This may enable the Port to remain competitive with other modes of freight transportation and to continue to meet its responsibilities as a generator of local economic activity.

The EA considered six alternatives: (1) No Action; (2) Dock Expansion and Storage Area Development (Proposed Action); (3) Improve Productivity at the Existing Dock (No-Build); (4) Add an Additional Berth; (5) Relocate the dock; and (6) Relocate the dock. The Corps identified screening criteria to determine which alternatives to consider further. The only alternative that met the criteria was the Proposed Action, therefore it was the only alternative (in addition to the No Actin alternative) carried forward for additional analysis.

The Corps identified alternative 2 as its proposed action/preferred alternative. Under this alternative, the Port would expand the existing dock facility and develop 2.1 acres of storage area. Expansion of the dock facility would consist of relocating the cellular sheet pile mooring dolphin located just downstream of the existing dock, extending the sheet pile bulkhead that forms the dock, installing tiebacks and deadmen, backfilling the dock area to grade, regrading the adjacent yard and installing a new storm draining system, paving, and installing the fender and barge handling systems. Storage area development would consist of grading to level the area and placement of a 12-inch thick gravel layer. No other improvements would be needed.

The proposed dock expansion and storage area development would have environmental effects in several resource areas, although none of them would be significant. Water quality effects would be minimal. There would be a short term increase in turbidity when the sheet pile was being installed, however, the plume would be small and should dissipate rapidly. Once the piling is in place, it would act as a coffer dam that would contain any turbidity generated by the placement of fill material. Installation of a new oil/water separator would improve the quality of storm water runoff from the site.

The proposed action would have an adverse effect on several fish species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act or their critical habitat. The Port will be required to implement conservation measures to reduce the magnitude of the construction effects such as performing the work during the summer, using a vibratory hammer to install sheet pile, and utilizing best management practices to reduce potential release of toxins into the river as conditions of the permit. Operational effects such as noise from tows or turbidity from prop wash would be minimal.

The proposed action may have positive effects on socioeconomic and transportation. The Port would be able to improve its efficiency in handling cargo, which could reduce time and costs and may help make the Port more competitive with other ports and transportation modes. However, this may not result in any increase in the number of barges, the amount of cargo, or the use of the Port as a transportation hub as usage is largely based on the state of the economy, (local, regional, national, and international), on market forces and changes in the transportation system.

Impacts of the dock expansion on the terrestrial environment, aquatic environment, cultural resources would be minimal. The project location has been heavily affected by commercial and industrial development and is already devoid of shoreline vegetation. The proposed storage area is a dredged material disposal site and supports a sparse cover of non-native weeds. The dock expansion would result in the loss of about 0.12 acres of open water habitat, but this would not significantly reduce the amount of aquatic habitat in the lower Clearwater River. Both the dock expansion and the development of the gravel storage area would occur entirely on land that has been used for upland disposal of dredged material, therefore there would be no potential to affect archaeological sites. The in-water portion of the dock expansion would not be located near any known archaeological sites.

The Corps selected alternative 2 because it would meet the Port's purpose and need, would have only minor environmental effects, and would be an acceptable minor modification to the Corps' levee.

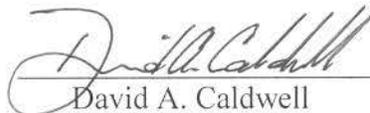
The Corps coordinated this project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Native American tribes with interests in the geographic area, and the public. The Corps consulted with USFWS and NMFS pursuant to their authorities under the Endangered Species Act. USFWS provided their biological opinion for bull trout in a letter dated January 4, 2012. NMFS provided their biological opinion for Snake River Basin steelhead and Snake River fall Chinook salmon in a letter dated March 28, 2012. The Corps will ensure compliance with all requirements covered by these agency recommendations. The Corps received a letter from, the Idaho SHPO dated March 9, 2012 concurring with the Corps'

determination of “no historic properties affected” pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Nez Perce Tribe requested Government-to-Government on the proposed action and the Corps consulted with the Tribe on April 2, 2012. Idaho Department of Environmental Quality issued Section 401 Water Quality Certification to the Port on February 6, 2012. The Department of the Army Section 404/10 permit will be issued concurrent with the signing of this decision document. The project is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

The Corps distributed the Environmental Assessment and draft FONSI for a two-week public review and extended that review by another two weeks in response to requests by the public and the Nez Perce Tribe. The Corps received 57 separate comments, 18 of which requested an extension in the comment period and 39 of which commented on the proposed action. Most of the commenters expressed concern about the effects of increased barge traffic and the connected actions involving transportation of oversized cargo on the highways leading from the Port. The Corps revised the Environmental Assessment where appropriate in response to these comments. A summary of the comments and the Corps’ responses are attached to this document

In view of the information provided by the Environmental Assessment, public and agency review, and Government-to-Government consultation I find that that approving the Port’s request to expand their dock and develop the storage area and issuing the Department of the Army Section 404/10 permit would not result in significant impacts on the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Date: 15 April 2012



David A. Caldwell
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Commander