

## Historic Components of the Project

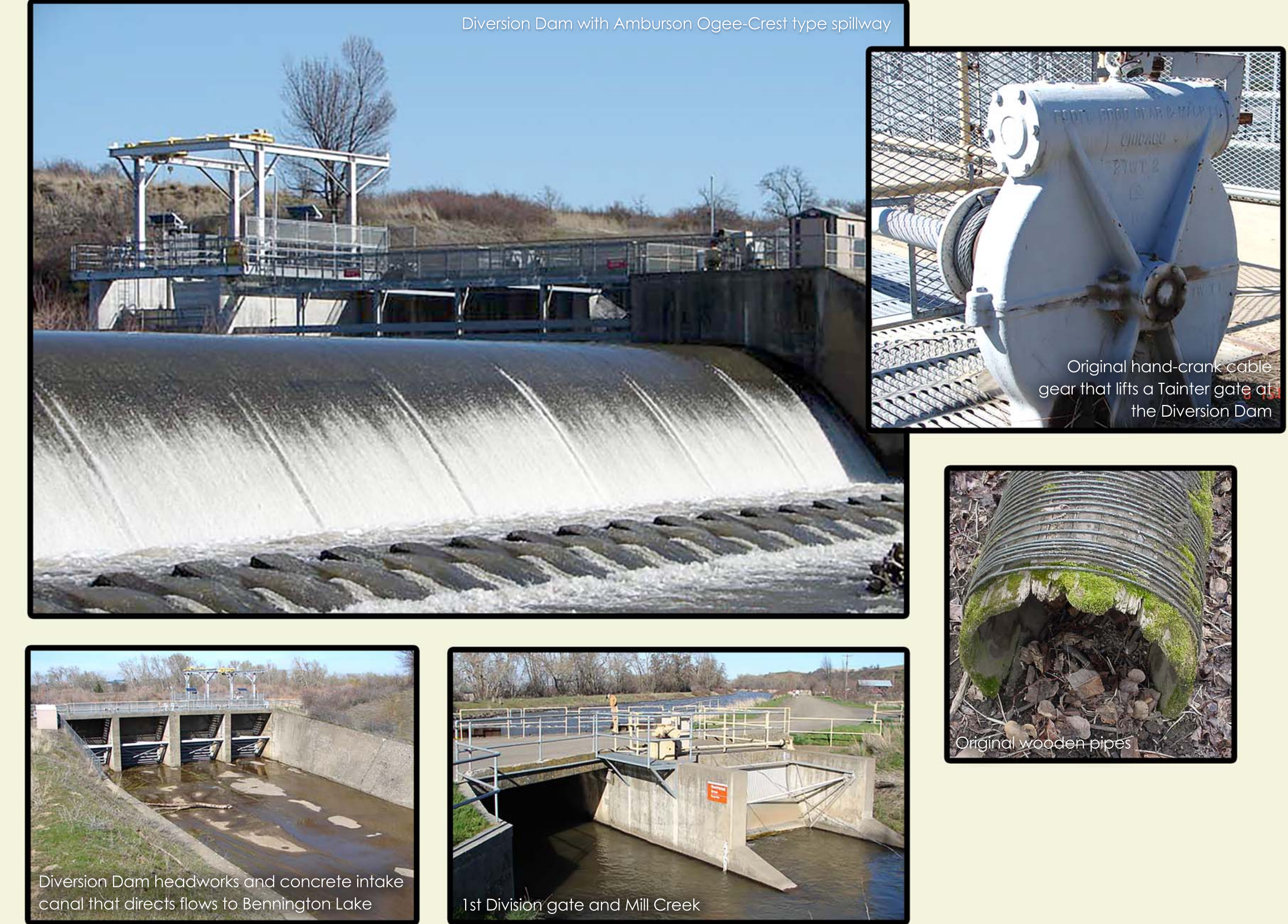
- > Mill Creek Diversion Levee
- > Mill Creek Dam and Diversion Headworks
- > Overflow Canal to Bennington Lake
- > Bennington Lake and Dam
- > Mill Creek Return Channel
- > Russell Creek Auxiliary Outlet Canal
- > Mill Creek Control Channel
- > Division Works (divides water to Garrison and Yellowhawk Creeks)

The entire Mill Creek Project is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Project was authorized by Congress in 1938 and cost about \$1.5 million. It was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The contractors were Parker-Shram of Portland and Eaton & Smith of San Francisco. Numerous local firms and residents worked on the construction and nine land-owners had their properties condemned for the 750 acre Project. All workmen were provided by the American Federation of Labor union. Three shifts worked 6 days a week. Wages for unskilled workers were 65 cents/hour. Power shovel operators received \$1.65/hour. Approximately 200 workmen were employed at maximum and construction was essentially completed by 1944.

Eligibility for the National Register is an acknowledgment that it is a significant historic property. Even so, the built components may be altered or even demolished, if necessary. However, any changes by the Corps must be documented and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The operations and maintenance of the Project retains the historic gates, cranks, guardrails, materials and visual aspects of the original construction. Studies for compliance with historic preservation laws have been undertaken for more than 50 Mill Creek projects during the past 40 years.

The upper Walla Walla Valley was the central homeland of the ethnographic Liksiyu (Cayuse) people and was used by the Wallulapam (Walla Walla) and the Imataláma (Umatilla). However, no prehistoric archaeological



sites have been located within the Project boundaries. A skirmish between Indians and U.S. Army soldiers occurred in the area after the 1856 Second Treaty Council of Walla Walla.

A portion of the Fort Walla Walla Timber Reservation (circa 1861-1875) overlays the present Project area. Prior to 1938, the area was predominately wheat fields. Farming practices and the extensive Project construction likely disturbed most of the ground surface.

No significant historical sites or artifacts have been found though a majority of the project area has been investigated through professional archaeological surveys. Numerous cultural- and historical-resources laws provide legal protections for objects of historical and cultural significance. It is illegal to disturb or take artifacts from federal lands, because they belong to all of us.