

Public Scoping Meeting

East Fork Irrigation District Irrigation Modernization Project

Thursday, October 18th, 2018

Meeting Purpose

To inform the community of the proposed East Fork Irrigation District Irrigation Modernization Project and to gather community comments and suggestions on the proposed project.

Project Goals

The goals of the proposed project are to modernize District-owned canals and laterals to conserve water, improve operational efficiencies and water supply reliability, enhance public safety, and improve habitat in the Hood River Watershed while improving the economic sustainability and resilience of local agriculture. The proposed project would help the agricultural community meet the requirements under the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

District Facts

- The East Fork Irrigation District (EFID) is within the Hood River basin, serves 990 patrons and irrigates approximately 9,600 acres.
- Water is delivered through a system of approximately 83 miles of pipes and open canals. The District loses an estimated 18% of diverted water (16.6 cubic feet per second or 5,287 acre-feet) to end spills over the entire irrigation season.
- Additional, unquantified water loss occurs from seepage and evaporation along the open canals.
- Water for EFID is diverted from the East Fork Hood River, which reduces stream flows and aquatic habitat in the East Fork Hood River and Hood River.
- The East Fork Hood River provides important habitat for sensitive species, including, but not limited to, steelhead trout, bull trout, Chinook and coho salmon, Pacific lamprey and many other fish, bird, and wildlife species.

Resource Concerns

The sponsors have identified the following resource concerns:

- Water loss in the District's conveyance system
- Water delivery inefficiencies, including end spills and high operation and maintenance costs
- Declining watershed supply due to retreating glaciers and climate change
- Reduced instream flow for fish and aquatic habitat and diminished water quality
- Poor irrigation water quality due to sediment
- Risk of open canals to human health and safety
- Inefficient energy usage from irrigation pumps

Potential Project Benefits

- Modernizing EFID’s system could reduce end spill losses by an estimated 16.6 cubic feet per second (5,287 acre-feet) over the entire irrigation season.
- Saved water could be permanently protected instream using Oregon’s Allocation of Conserved Water Program, enhancing stream flow in the Hood River while also improving water supply reliability to EFID patrons.
- More instream flow in the Hood River could lower stream temperatures and increase available habitat for sensitive fish and other aquatic species.
- Irrigation water delivery reliability could be improved to ensure that patrons receive the amount of water they need at the right time. Reduced silt levels could also improve the quality of irrigation water delivered to patrons.
- Public safety could be improved by converting open canals to buried pipe, eliminating the risk of drowning and canal breaches.
- EFID patron energy costs could be reduced by up to 1.4 megawatt hours per year, or approximately \$112,000 annually.

Stakeholders/Entities with Interest

The project sponsor is the East Fork Irrigation District (EFID), in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA). Currently identified stakeholders include:

- Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers
- Columbia Land Trust
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
- District patrons and water users
- Hood River County
- Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District
- Hood River Watershed Group
- Mt. Hood Irrigation District
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Oregon State University Extension Service, Hood River County Office
- Oregon Water Resources Department
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Trout Unlimited
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- United States Forest Service, Mt Hood National Forest, Hood River Ranger District
- Water Watch of Oregon
- Wy’East Fire District

Scoping comments will be accepted through November 16, 2018

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