

Klamath Irrigation District D-System Modernization Project

Scoping Summary Document

Project Sponsor

Klamath Irrigation District

Lead Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service - Oregon

Project Location

Klamath Irrigation District (K.I.D. or the District) is located in southern Oregon, south and east of Klamath Falls, and the District stretches to near the California border. The Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA) project area consists of the District infrastructure to be modernized and constructed (canal, laterals, and pumps) and associated rights-of-way and/or easements where construction would take place.

Project Background

Klamath Irrigation District is seeking federal funding through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program, Public Law 83-566 (PL 83-566). This funding would be invested to modernize irrigation canals, laterals, and other infrastructure throughout the District.

The District is part of the Bureau of Reclamation's Klamath Project and serves over 2,500 patrons across 53,638 irrigated acres in Klamath County, as well as other irrigation districts in the region. The District supplies irrigated lands with water from Upper Klamath Lake. Water is diverted at Reclamation's A-Canal Headworks and is conveyed over 200 miles of canals and laterals. These canals and laterals are up to 113 years old and lose approximately 35% of the water to seepage and evaporation.

In recent years, the Klamath Project has faced severe droughts that have limited, and in the worst cases, halted water supply to irrigators. Water shortages are exacerbated due to the aging state of the District's conveyance system, which inefficiently delivers the available water. The operation and maintenance costs of managing open canals and laterals prevent the District from investing in modernization efforts that could greatly increase the efficiency of water delivery throughout the District.

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve water conveyance efficiency, reduce operations and maintenance costs, and improve drought resilience for the local agricultural community. The project would include piping and/or lining canals and laterals and installing automatic flow monitoring equipment on District-owned infrastructure.

Water Loss in District Conveyance Systems

The District's open canals and laterals lose about 35% of their flow to seepage, evaporation, and end spills. Water losses due to inefficient conveyance systems can prevent the District from delivering to its patrons the full rate and duty associated with each water right.

Water Delivery and Operation Inefficiencies

The District's canals and laterals do not transport and deliver water as precisely, accurately, or efficiently as a modernized system would. Water losses through seepage, end spills, lack of measurement devices and automation at turnout locations, and fluctuations in water demand make it much more challenging for the District to deliver the amount of water that patrons need when they need it. The challenge of assuring that patrons at the tail end of the system receive water, compounded by the operational inefficiencies mentioned above, result in water being spilled back to waterways, Tulelake Irrigation District, and other water users.

D-System Project

The D-System, 46 miles from the diversion, is particularly difficult to control for the District. In years with good water supply, it can take 72 to 90 hours to deliver water to this part of the District and under drought conditions it can take twice as long. In order to deliver water to users at the tail ends of the system, more water must be pushed through the system resulting in up to 20% of water leaving the District via end spills.

To address inefficiencies, the District is considering modernizing the D-System which would include lining or piping canals and laterals, upgrading pump stations, and installing water measurement and automated control devices.

The proposed project is regionally significant as agriculture is an essential part of the Klamath Basin's economy. Agricultural production depends on the District's ability to deliver water effectively and efficiently, particularly during drought years when surface water allocation is scarce. Modernizing K.I.D. infrastructure would improve water conveyance efficiency, reduce operations and maintenance costs, and improve drought resilience for the local agricultural community.

[Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 \(Public Law PL 83-566\)](#)

The District is seeking federal funding through PL 83-566. Federal investments through PL 83-566 need to comply with both the program's requirements as outlined in the Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies and Federal Water Resource Investments (PR&G) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. NRCS, as the lead federal agency, will meet requirements of both NEPA and the PR&Gs simultaneously through the Watershed Planning process.

[NEPA and PR&G Analysis](#)

NEPA and other applicable laws require a complete analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as the consideration of additional alternatives. PR&G requires additional analyses, such as an economic analysis and inclusion of effects to ecosystem services, to meet the requirements of the program. Public scoping is the first step in the NEPA process and is required under PL 83-566. Under this step, NRCS releases a Scoping Document to resource agencies, interested stakeholders, and the public to inform them of the need for NEPA and PR&G analyses, and to learn of any information or concerns relevant to the analyses.

Potential Resource Concerns

Potential resource concerns and environmental effects will be analyzed as part of a Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment for the project. The following potential resources may be further addressed in the Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment:

- Cultural Resources and Historic Properties
- Environmental Justice
- Fish and Aquatic Species
- Floodplains
- Geology and Soils
- Invasive Species
- Land Use, Zoning, and Ownership
- Prime Farmland
- Public Safety
- Recreation
- Socioeconomics
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Vegetation
- Visual Resources
- Wetland and Riparian Areas
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wildlife

Public Involvement

Your input helps Klamath Irrigation District and NRCS make informed decisions. The scoping process is part of an approach to obtain input from stakeholders about the project and to ensure that significant decision-making factors are addressed. The scoping process helps to ensure that the level of analysis for the proposed project is appropriate, and it helps to anticipate any significant impacts that may result in the need for an Environmental Impact Statement, or whether an Environmental Assessment (EA) should be prepared. At this time, NRCS anticipates that a Draft Plan-EA would be prepared following scoping.

You are encouraged to participate in the planning process by attending meetings, reviewing project materials, and submitting questions and comments during official comment periods. The scoping comment period for the Klamath Irrigation District Modernization Project began January 23, 2023 and will end March 9, 2023.

When submitting a comment, please provide your name and contact information. There are several ways to leave a comment:

- Send an email to klamath.id.comments@gmail.com
- Leave on comment online at oregonwatershedplans.org
- Leave a voice message at 541-716-6085 (Farmers Conservation Alliance's office)
- Mail a letter to Farmers Conservation Alliance, 102 State St., Hood River, OR 97031

Scoping Meeting

The purpose of the scoping meeting is to inform the community and interested stakeholders about the Klamath Irrigation District Modernization Project and to gather community comments and suggestions on the proposed project.

The scoping meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2023 at 4 P.M. The meeting will be held at the Merrill Civic Center, Walt Wilson Hall at 363 W Front St, Merrill, OR.

Available in Other Languages

Project materials will be printed and presented in English but may be provided in other languages upon request.

Farmers Conservation Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which, as a contractor, is assisting NRCS and Klamath Irrigation District in the Watershed Plan - Environmental Assessment process.