

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING PERIOD

Rogue River Valley Irrigation District Public Law 83-566 Project

Project Sponsor/Lead Agency:

Rogue River Valley Irrigation District

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Purpose of Scoping Meeting

The purpose of the scoping meeting is to inform the public, community, and interested stakeholders about the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District Public Law 83-566 Project and to gather comments and suggestions on the proposed project. Under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566), scoping is an early step in the watershed planning process used to identify important issues, resource concerns, and potential alternatives related to the project.

The sponsor is the Rogue River Valley Irrigation District (RRVID or District) and the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Oregon is the federal agency administering the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program. The City of Medford is a project partner.

Following this scoping period, project partners will use input received to inform development of the watershed planning analyses required under NRCS program requirements, which include those of the Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies and Federal Water Resource Investments (PR&G).

This scoping effort is focused on identifying resource concerns, potential alternatives, and information needed to complete planning analyses. A separate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process will occur at a later stage of the project. NRCS will prepare a Draft Watershed Plan-Environmental Assessment (Plan-EA) or, if required, a Draft Watershed Plan-Environmental Impact Statement (Plan-EIS), which will ensure compliance with both Watershed Program and NEPA requirements.

Meeting Information

An in-person scoping meeting will be held for this project, and presentation slides will be available following the meeting at www.rrvid-watershedplan.org.

Public Scoping Meeting

April 7, 2026

6–7 p.m.

Rogue Community College Table Rock Campus, Room 184
7800 Pacific Ave, White City, OR 97503

Project Location

The project is located in Jackson County, Oregon. RRVID serves agricultural lands primarily in and around the communities of Central Point, White City, Eagle Point, and Medford. The District is one of three in the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Rogue River Basin Project – Talent Division. Reclamation maintains many of the storage and delivery systems in the basin; however, within RRVID, the only infrastructure owned by Reclamation is Agate Reservoir.

Project Description

RRVID is seeking federal funding to improve agricultural water availability and management within the District. RRVID experiences periodic irrigation water shortages that reduce reliability for irrigated agriculture and create economic uncertainty for farms and rural communities.

Agriculture is an essential part of the Jackson County economy. The District receives approximately 19 inches of rainfall annually, with only 2.9 inches occurring during the growing season. As a result, agricultural production relies heavily on irrigation water. The District operates and maintains 93 miles of canals, laterals, and pipelines, in addition to Agate Reservoir, delivering water to 713 patrons who irrigate approximately 9,300 acres of hay, alfalfa, pasture, orchards and other crops.

In recent years, drought conditions in the Rogue Basin have limited available water supplies and negatively impacted agricultural producers and crop yields. Rising temperatures and decreasing snowpack are expected to further strain water supplies in the coming decades. Improving water availability, water management, and conveyance efficiency is critical to maintaining long-term agricultural productivity and supporting the regional economy.

Water shortages are exacerbated by the aging and inefficient condition of RRVID's conveyance system. The current system experiences water losses due to seepage, evaporation, and operational inefficiencies associated with open canals. Water lost through these inefficiencies does not reach irrigated lands where it is needed for crop production.

Two alternatives have been preliminary identified for analysis: a No Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, RRVID would continue operating and maintaining its current system. Under the Proposed Action Alternative, potential actions could include piping open canals, upgrading existing pipelines, installing a new pipeline to convey recycled water produced by the City of Medford to RRVID, installing pumps, constructing a small reregulation reservoir, upgrading siphons, expanding existing reservoirs, and/or installing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems. Additional alternatives identified during the scoping process may also be developed and analyzed.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566)

RRVID is seeking federal funding through the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program (Public Law 83-566). Federal investments through Public Law 83-566 need to comply with both NEPA and Watershed Program requirements.

NRCS, as the lead federal agency, will address these requirements through the watershed planning process, which includes evaluation of project alternatives and analyses of environmental, economic, and public benefits.

Resource Concerns and Environmental Considerations

Resource concerns and potential effects associated with the project will be evaluated through the watershed planning process in accordance with PR&G requirements and will also be addressed in future NEPA documentation. Potential resource topics that may be analyzed include, but are not limited to:

- Cultural Resources
- Endangered and Threatened Species
- Fish and Aquatic Species
- Invasive Species
- Land Use
- Prime and Unique Farmlands
- Soils
- Vegetation
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Wildlife

Additional resource topics identified during the scoping process may also be considered in subsequent analyses.

Public Involvement

As part of the watershed planning process, a public participation plan has been prepared outlining outreach activities. Meetings and media outreach will be conducted to provide opportunities for public participation, including informational meetings and opportunities to submit feedback.

This scoping meeting is the first major opportunity for public involvement in the watershed planning process. Additional opportunities for public participation, including future NEPA review, will occur later in

the project. The public, as well as Tribes, agencies, and other interested parties, are also encouraged to provide comment on issues relating to cultural resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This letter does not replace formal Section 106 notification, which will occur at a later date.

Scoping Period

This document and the associated scoping meeting meet public participation requirements under Public Law 83-566. This scoping effort is designed to gather input from stakeholders to help define the appropriate scope of analysis, identify relevant resource concerns, and refine potential alternatives for further evaluation.

Public input helps RRVID and NRCS make informed decisions regarding project development and potential federal funding. You are encouraged to participate by attending meetings, reviewing project materials, and submitting questions and comments during official comment periods to rrvid.comments@gmail.com, online at www.rrvid-watershedplan.org, by phone at (541) 716-6085, or by mail to: FCA, Attn: RRVID Scoping, 102 State Street, Hood River, OR 97031.

Additional information is available at www.rrvid-watershedplan.org or on the NRCS Oregon Public Notices website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/oregon/oregon-public-notice.