

MINIDOKA DAM SPILLWAY REPLACEMENT

Minidoka Project
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE
December 2008

The National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted into law on January 1, 1969. It requires Federal agencies to evaluate and consider environmental factors during decision making and to seek input to these evaluations from state and local agencies, Tribal Governments, organizations, and the public. Agencies also must consider and evaluate a range of alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action.

When a Federal action is determined likely to significantly affect the quality of the human environment, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared. The EIS provides decision-makers with important information on the types of issues and concerns identified by the public, the expected environmental consequences of all alternatives, and potential mitigation measures.

Terms Commonly Associated with an EIS

- ❖ **Federal Action** – This is what triggers the requirement for NEPA compliance. It can be an action that the Federal agency will take, or a decision that must be made, that may significantly impact the human environment.
- ❖ **Scoping** – The process by which input from the public, agencies, and organizations is sought to help define the alternatives, issues, and impacts that should be addressed in the EIS.
- ❖ **Purpose and Need** – The statement of purpose and need identifies the underlying reasons why an action is needed.
- ❖ **Proposed Action** – This is the action initially identified to meet the identified purpose and need for action.
- ❖ **Alternatives** – These are reasonable actions that meet the identified purpose and need of the proposed action.
- ❖ **Federal Preferred Alternative** – This is the alternative that the Federal agency proposes to implement. If one has been identified, it will be described in the Draft EIS. A Preferred Alternative must be identified in the Final EIS.
- ❖ **No Action Alternative** – This is considered to be the most likely future without

implementation of the proposed action or other alternative.

- ❖ **Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Further Study** – These are other alternatives considered, but not found to be technically feasible or to reasonably meet the purpose and need of the proposed action.
- ❖ **Record of Decision** – This document summarizes the alternatives considered in the EIS and identifies the agency's decision along with the basis for that decision.

NEPA as an Umbrella for Other Environmental Laws

Compliance with related environmental laws, rules, regulations, and executive and secretarial orders is integrated into the NEPA process and documented in the EIS. However, these other laws, regulations and Executive and Secretarial Orders have their own specific compliance requirements separate from NEPA. A partial list of other major environmental laws, regulations, and Executive and Secretarial Orders requiring compliance includes:

Endangered Species Act
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
National Historic Preservation Act
Clean Water Act
Environmental Justice Executive Order
Sacred Sites Executive Order
Indian Trust Assets Secretarial Order

FOR MORE INFORMATION

EIS Website:

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/eis/minidokadam/index.html>

Activity Manager:

Allyn Meuleman
Bureau of Reclamation
230 Collins Road
Boise, Idaho 83702-4520

208-383-2258
208-383-2237 FAX
Minidoka_dam_eis@pn.usbr.gov

Dated: November 6, 2008.

Randall B. Luthi,

Director, Minerals Management Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Reclamation

Minidoka Dam Spillway Replacement; Minidoka County, ID

AGENCY: Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Minidoka Dam Spillway Replacement. Alternatives currently being considered are No Action as required under NEPA, total replacement of the spillway and headgate structures, or replacement of just the spillway.

Reclamation is requesting early public comment and agency input to help identify significant issues or other alternatives to be addressed in the EIS. Information obtained during the scoping period will help in developing information to be included in the EIS. A draft EIS is expected to be provided to the public for review by winter, 2009 followed by opportunities to provide written and oral comments. The final EIS is scheduled for completion in winter, 2010. A Record of Decision, describing which alternative is selected for implementation, and the rationale for its selection, would then be issued following a 30-day waiting period.

DATES: Scoping meetings will be held on the following dates and times:

- *Idaho Falls, ID: December 3, 2008:* Open House Meeting 6 pm to 9 pm.
- *Burley, ID: December 4, 2008:* Open House Meeting 6 pm to 9 pm.

Written comments will be accepted through December 19, 2008 for inclusion in the scoping summary document. Please direct requests for sign language interpretation for the hearing impaired or other auxiliary aids, to Ms. Allyn Meuleman by November 24, 2008, at the telephone or fax numbers listed under the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** section of this notice.

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests to be added to the mailing list may be submitted to Bureau of Reclamation, Snake River Area Office, Attention: Allyn Meuleman, Activity Manager, 230

Collins Road, Boise, ID 83702-4520. Comments may also be submitted electronically to minidoka_dam_eis@pn.usbr.gov.

The scoping meetings will be held at the following locations which are physically accessible to people with disabilities.

- Red Lion Hotel, 475 River Park Way, Idaho Falls, ID 83402
- Burley Best Western Inn, 800 North Overland Avenue, Burley, ID 83318

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Contact Allyn Meuleman, (208) 383-2258, fax: (208) 383-2237 for additional information. Information on this project can also be found at: <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/eis/minidokadam/index.html>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the proposed spillway replacement action is to prevent a structural failure of the Minidoka Dam spillway and associated structures.

Minidoka Dam impounds Lake Walcott and is a feature of Reclamation's Minidoka Project. They are located on the main stem Snake River about 18 miles northeast from the city of Burley, ID within the Minidoka Wildlife Refuge. After over 103 years of continued use, the over 2000 feet long concrete spillway at the Minidoka Dam has reached the end of its functional lifespan. The concrete that forms the spillway crest and the piers of the pier-and-stoplog structure shows extensive visible deterioration at numerous locations. In addition, the potential for ice damage to the stoplog piers requires that reservoir water levels be dropped each winter. The headgate structures at the North Side Canal and South Side Canal also show serious concrete deterioration similar to that seen along the spillway. The current conditions of the Minidoka Dam spillway and headgate structures present increasingly difficult reliability and maintenance problems. If structural problems are not corrected there is potential of partial or complete failure of the spillway and headgates. If these failures occur, Reclamation may not be able to meet contractual obligations for water delivery, power generation and Reclamation's commitments to deliver flow augmentation water under the Nez Perce Settlement Agreement and the Endangered Species Act.

A related action which may be considered is a structural raise (to be determined) of Minidoka Dam to accommodate a 5-foot raise in the Reservoir Water Surface (RWS) elevation. The Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) is funding a special study that explores the feasibility and costs

associated with this action. The purpose of the dam raise is to increase the storage capacity of Lake Walcott by approximately 50,000 acre-feet as one element of efforts to address water supply concerns in the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer area. The IWRB anticipates the additional supplies of stored water could be used to help address surface and groundwater demands by implementing improvement measures being considered by the State. If the IWRB decides to pursue this action, a supplemental EIS will be developed to evaluate impacts.

Public Involvement

Reclamation will conduct public scoping meetings to solicit input on the alternatives developed to address replacement of the Minidoka Dam Spillway and associated structures and the impacts associated with those alternatives. Reclamation will summarize comments received during the scoping meetings and written comments received during the scoping period, identified under **DATES**, into a scoping summary document which will be made available to those who have provided comments. It will also be available to others upon request and will be posted on the Web site listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**.

If you wish to comment, you may provide your comments as indicated under the **ADDRESSES** section. Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment (including your personal identifying information) may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

J. William McDonald,

Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region.

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MINIDOKA DAM SPILLWAY REPLACEMENT EIS

Minidoka Project
Scoping Meetings
December 2008

Reclamation intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Minidoka Dam Spillway Replacement. Reclamation is requesting early public comment and agency input to help identify significant issues or other alternatives to be addressed in the EIS. Information obtained during the scoping period (November 12-December 19, 2008) will help in developing information to be included in the EIS. A draft EIS is expected to be provided to the public for review by winter, 2009 followed by opportunities to provide written and oral comments. The final EIS is scheduled for completion in winter, 2010. A Record of Decision, describing which alternative is selected for implementation, and the rationale for its selection, would then be issued following a 30-day waiting period. Additional information about the project is available at Reclamation's website:

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/eis/minidokadam/index.html>

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

Reclamation is hosting two public meetings to obtain your input about the project. During these meetings, the current alternatives being considered will be described and staff will be available to answer questions. You will also be given an opportunity to identify issues and concerns associated with the current alternatives and to identify other potential alternatives.

SCOPING MEETING DETAILS

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Red Lion Hotel
475 River Park Way
Idaho Falls, ID

Thursday, December 4, 2008

Burley Best Western Inn
800 North Overland Avenue
Burley, ID

Both meetings are from 6 – 9 p.m.

The meeting facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities. If you need other accommodations or auxiliary aids, please contact Allyn Meuleman 208 -383 -2258 before November 24th, 2008.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed spillway replacement action is to prevent a structural failure of the Minidoka Dam spillway and associated structures. Minidoka Dam impounds Lake Walcott and is a feature of Reclamation's Minidoka Project. They are located on the main stem Snake River about 18 miles northeast from the city of Burley, Idaho within the Minidoka Wildlife Refuge. After over 103 years of continued use, the over 2,000 feet-long concrete spillway at the Minidoka Dam has reached the end of its functional lifespan. The concrete that forms the spillway crest and the piers and-stoplog structure shows extensive visible deterioration at numerous locations. In addition, the potential for ice damage to the stoplog piers requires that reservoir water levels be dropped each winter. The headgate structures at the North Side Canal and South Side Canal also show serious concrete deterioration similar to that seen along the spillway. The current condition of the Minidoka Dam spillway and headgate structures present increasingly difficult reliability and maintenance problems. If structural problems are not corrected, there is potential of partial or complete failure of the spillway and headgates. If these failures occur, Reclamation may not be able to meet contractual obligations for water delivery, power generation, and commitments to deliver flow augmentation water under the Nez Perce Settlement Agreement and the Endangered Species Act.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

Reclamation is currently investigating the alternatives identified below.

- No Action
- Total replacement of the spillway and headgate structures
- Replacement of just the spillway

YOUR FEEDBACK REQUESTED

We want to hear your thoughts about the issues and concerns associated with the proposed alternatives. Please attend one of the scoping meetings scheduled in December 2008 to provide input. If you cannot attend one of our public scoping meetings, please submit your comments using the enclosed comment form and return it to us by December 19, 2008.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the project, please contact:

Allyn Meuleman, Activity Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
230 Collins Road
Boise, Idaho 83712
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208-383-2275 (fax)
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MINIDOKA DAM SPILLWAY REPLACEMENT Minidoka Project

NEPA PROCESS December 2008



