

LNFH SWISP EIS Scoping Q&A Video Teleconference (May 18, 2020)

Transcript

SLIDE 1 – Welcome/Introduction

- Welcome everyone to the Bureau of Reclamation's Q&A Video Teleconference for the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Surface Water Intake Fish Screens and Fish Passage Project or SWISP Project EIS.
- Before we start today I would like to inform you that this teleconference is being recorded and will be placed on the Bureau of Reclamation's website at <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/leavenworth/swisp/index.html>. Your questions will be captured as part of the teleconference record and your participation acknowledges your consent to be included.
- My name is Jason Sutter, and I am the Bureau of Reclamation's NEPA co-lead on the SWISP Project for the Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region. Representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, who is proposing the project, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who owns and operates the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, are here with us today to answer your questions and provide additional information about the project. We'll introduce them a bit later.
- Also, with me today are Morgan Trieger and Amy Lewis from Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, who are helping us manage and present this video teleconference.
- I'd like to thank everyone participating in today's video teleconference for your time and involvement in the public comment process.
- Before we provide a brief project overview and give you an opportunity to ask questions, I'd like to let David Child, the SWISP Project Manager from the Bureau of Reclamation and Jim Craig, Leavenworth Fisheries Complex Manager from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, a chance to provide some opening remarks.
 - **David Child:** Introduction and opening remarks
 - **Jim Craig:** Introduction and opening remarks
- Thank you, David and Jim. This Q&A Video Teleconference is provided to inform the public of the current status of the project, provide an overview of the proposed action, and provide you with the opportunity to ask questions relating to the project and how to provide scoping comments.
- Also, we have heard about instances of people hacking into presentations in the electronic world to cause disturbance. We don't imagine that will happen today but just in case, if there are any security issues with the site or call, we will discontinue the meeting and reschedule for another time.

SLIDE 2 – Purpose of the Video Teleconference

- The purpose of this video conference is to provide you with an overview and answer any questions you may have about the SWISP Project EIS. The presentation will review the purpose and need of the EIS, project background, the proposed action, and go over how to provide scoping comments.

- When the presentation has finished, we will start the question and answer session.
- Now I'd like to introduce the other members of Reclamation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service that are also here today to help answer your questions. Starting with the Bureau of Reclamation we have:
 - David Child, SWISP Project Manager
 - Elizabeth Heether, NEPA Co-Lead from the Columbia-Cascades Area Office
- From the US Fish and Wildlife Service we have:
 - Jim Craig, Leavenworth Fisheries Complex Manager
 - Mathew Maxey, Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Manager

SLIDE 3 – Video Teleconference Communication Process

- Before we get started reviewing information about the project, I want to point out how to communicate with us during this video teleconference.
 - Your cameras and microphone controls will be restricted during the meeting. In other words, I cannot see or hear you, but you can see our screen and hear me.
 - However, you will have an opportunity to ask questions, so I want to share how to do that.
 - When we get to the end of this presentation, I will prompt listeners to submit questions by using the Chat feature in the webinar controls. This should appear if you hover your mouse or pointer over the bottom of your screen. As pictured here (showing the app on a phone), a control panel should be showing you a chat icon. You can click on this and a panel will appear to the side of the presentation.
 - Reclamation will not be accepting public scoping comments during this video teleconference. Reclamation highly values public input on this project. After the presentation, Reclamation will provide attendees with information on how to submit scoping comments.
 - Given the limited time for questions and answers during this webinar session, please keep your questions focused on those related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, including the process to date and looking forward, any issues you may be concerned about, and on how to provide scoping comments.
 - And lastly, I want to let everyone know that this teleconference is being recorded so the audio recording can be posted on our project website. We hope this will be helpful for people who want to revisit the presentation or listen later if they could not participate today's teleconference at our scheduled time.

SLIDE 4 – Introduction and Background

- Reclamation is proposing to rehabilitate, replace, and modernize the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery surface water intake and delivery system on Icicle Creek near Leavenworth, Washington.
- The Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery was designed and constructed in the late 1930s as mitigation for the construction and operation of Grand Coulee Dam.

- The Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery is one of three mitigation hatcheries established by the Grand Coulee Fish Maintenance Project to compensate for anadromous fish losses above Grand Coulee Dam. It is operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and funded by Reclamation and Bonneville Power Administration. The hatchery raises and releases 1.2 million spring chinook salmon smolts into Icicle Creek annually.
- The LNFH's primary point of diversion and water delivery system on Icicle Creek is nearly 80 years old and is reaching or exceeding its operational life. Rehabilitation, replacement, and modernization of the LNFH surface water intake and delivery system has been proposed and evaluated several times over the last 20 years.

SLIDE 5 – Purpose and Need

- Currently, the intake facility does not comply with National Marine Fisheries Service criteria for anadromous salmonids. The 2017 National Marine Fisheries Service biological opinion covering operations requires the hatchery to have a surface water intake and delivery system that complies with National Marine Fisheries Service current screening and fish passage criteria for anadromous fish passage facilities in place and operating by May 2023.
- In addition to meeting legal requirements, the hatchery needs to improve employee safety when operating and maintaining intake and delivery facilities, improve flow control and water conservation capabilities, effectively manage sediment adversely affecting the water delivery system, and increase reliability and longevity of the system.
- The purpose of the Surface Water Intake Fish Screens and Fish Passage Project or SWISP Project is to minimize take of ESA-listed fish species, provide fish passage that complies with current regulatory criteria, and ensure safe, efficient, and reliable delivery of LNFH's full surface water rights from Icicle Creek.

SLIDE 6 – Cooperating and Participating Agencies

- The Bureau of Reclamation and US Fish and Wildlife Service staff have been working closely with many Federal, State, local and Tribal agencies and stakeholders to develop a project that meets current regulatory requirements and the current and future obligations and needs of the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery.

SLIDE 7 – Proposed Action

- Reclamation proposes to rehabilitate the LNFH intake and delivery system on Icicle Creek by constructing new headworks and a creek-width roughened channel and replacing/lining the surface water conveyance pipeline to the hatchery. In addition, the current intake access road would be modified and extended to provide better entry to an expanded intake operations and maintenance area.

SLIDE 8 – Intake Project Area

- Construction of the headworks and roughened channel would incorporate the existing low head diversion dam and intake channel. Self-cleaning, cylindrical fish screens would be installed at the diversion headworks, and a low-flow boulder weir fishway would be integrated into the roughened channel. A new pipeline would be placed in the intake channel to connect the headworks to the conveyance pipeline. The intake channel would be filled to cover the pipeline and create the intake operations and maintenance area.

SLIDE 9 – LNFH SWISP project

- The conveyance pipeline would be replaced on USFWS lands and lined with cure-in-place liner on private parcels. Construction of several access points along the existing conveyance pipeline alignment would be installed to provide ingress and egress for pipe lining on private lands.
- Water supply to the LNFH would be maintained during construction through either a gravity-fed bypass connected to the existing conveyance pipeline or through a pump from the stilling basin adjacent to LNFH.

SLIDE 10 – Project Construction Disturbance Area

- The primary staging site would be located on LNFH grounds. Trucks hauling construction equipment and containing construction materials would be required to turn around approximately 1 mile above the project area. Access to the conveyance pipeline would use existing roads and pipeline right-of-way.

SLIDE 11 – Scoping Period

- In the EIS, Reclamation will evaluate the impacts of the construction and operation of the SWISP project on the natural and human environment within the project area. Resources include but are not limited to ESA-listed species, water resources including water quality, Tribal interest such as sacred sites and Indian Trust Assets, recreation and Environmental Justice. Reclamation will utilize knowledge gained from previous environmental analyses to inform the scope and level of analyses for the SWISP EIS.
- Scoping is an open and early step in the NEPA process that helps the lead federal agency determine the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS and to identify significant issues related to the proposed action. Information collected during scoping may also be used to develop the alternatives to the proposed action to be analyzed in the EIS. The scoping process improves the lead federal agency decision making process and transparency during EIS development.

SLIDE 12 – Public Scoping Comments

- The public now has the opportunity to participate in the scoping process and provide input through a web-based virtual meeting room from April 24, 2020 to May 26, 2020. The virtual “meeting” is accessible at <https://virtualpublicmeeting.com/leavenworth-swisp-eis>.
- Comments must be submitted by close of business on May 26, 2020, in the web-based virtual meeting room, by email to BOR-SHA-PNRLSWISP@usbr.gov, or by mail. If submitting an email, please indicate “SWISP Scoping Comments” in the email subject line. To submit written comments, please contact Jason Sutter, EIS Team Lead, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia–Pacific Northwest Regional Office, 1150 N. Curtis Road, Boise, ID 83706.
- More information can be found on the SWISP official website: <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/leavenworth/swisp/index.html>. Please know that while you cannot see us, my colleagues and I eager to listen to questions and provide answers as best as we can. In addition, we hope you will provide written comments through our Virtual Public Meeting website online, by email or post.

Slide 13 – What’s Next

- The Notice of Intent kicked off a 30-day scoping period. We will use the comments received during scoping to help us refine the project alternatives and identify issues for analysis in the EIS. The Draft EIS will be available for public review for a 45-day comment period. Substantive comments will be analyzed, and changes will be made as necessary to the EIS. The Final EIS will

then be published and, after a 30-day waiting period, the decisionmaker may sign and publish the Record of Decision. Upon issuance of the Record of Decision, Reclamation can move forward with the next phase of the project.

Slide 14 – Thank you

- This concludes our brief overview presentation. Thank you for listening.
- At this time, we will address questions specific to the NEPA process, the proposed action, issues you are concerned about, or scoping comment submission. Official scoping comments should be submitted in writing to the physical address, by email, or through the Virtual Public meeting website.
- During this time, I want to remind you that your phones will continue to be muted, so please use the chat feature on the webinar menu.
- I will now turn it over to Amy for the Q& A Session

Slide 15 – Q&A Guidelines

- Hello everybody, my name is Amy, and I will be giving you some guidelines as we start the Q and A session. Thank you again for participating in this video teleconference. I would like to remind you that this teleconference is being recorded and will be placed on the Bureau of Reclamation's website at <https://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/leavenworth/swisp/index.html>. Your questions will be captured as part of the teleconference record and your participation acknowledges your consent to be included.
- At this time, if you have a question, please go ahead and click on the chat icon at the bottom of your Zoom screen. You can type your question in the chat box and send it to the host of the meeting, Morgan Trieger. I will then read the question aloud for all participants to hear, and a Reclamation staff member will respond to your question aloud. We will try to answer your questions in the order that they are received. Note that there could be a short pause between people asking questions and Reclamation answering them. You will be removed from the meeting if you inappropriately harass agency staff or other attendees with your questions.
- Just a reminder, Reclamation will not be accepting public scoping comments during this video teleconference. So, we ask that you limit your questions to those related the NEPA process, issues you are concerned about, or scoping comment submission. If we do not get the opportunity to respond to your question during this session, you can email your question to BOR-SHA-PNRLSWISP@usbr.gov or submit it through the Virtual Public Meeting website Q&A page.
- We will go over instructions for submitting a question if you are calling in just through your phone once we have gone through all the questions submitted via the chat function, so please stay tuned for those instructions.
- We will now begin our question and answer session. Please note that there may be a pause between asking your question, and a Reclamation staff member answering your question.

[Q&A time]

- Question #1: How will Reclamation engage the public during the scoping period?
 - Reclamation is committed to an open and inclusive NEPA process. All comments will be carefully considered in our review and decision(s) on meeting the agency's NEPA responsibilities and other applicable laws in this process. The public participates in the

NEPA scoping process by helping to identify EIS issues and potential alternatives to the proposed action, and by evaluating the analysis of the proposed action and alternatives in the draft EIS during the public review period for that document. All public comments received are considered. As the first step in the NEPA process, Reclamation initiated the “scoping period” by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on April 24, 2020. The NOI announced that an EIS would be prepared for the proposed SWISP Project. The public scoping comment period will end on May 26, 2020. Reclamation issued a news release and media advisory to announce the NOI and public comment opportunities. As part of the public scoping process, Reclamation will host a live, moderated video teleconference session on May 18, 2020, to learn about the proposed project and the NEPA process. Attendees can ask Reclamation and LNFH staff questions during the session. More details are available here. To ensure the public has an opportunity to review public meeting materials and have questions answered, this virtual public meeting website has been developed. The public can submit comments through the virtual public scoping meeting website at any time during the scoping period. Information also is available on Reclamation’s SWISP EIS website.

Slide 16 – Phone-only Participants

- If you are calling in through your phone and you have a question, please press *9 to raise your hand to let us know that you have a question. I will then unmute you so that you can ask your question. I will identify you by the last four digits of your phone number. You will remain muted until you “raise your hand” and I unmute you, so please remember to speak once prompted.

Slide 17 – Closing Remarks

- Thank you all for your time and attention today.
- We will be posting the slides from today’s presentation, the questions and answers discussed today, and the recording of the teleconference on the Reclamation Project Website. You will also be able to find updates on the project on the website moving forward.
- I recognize this is a very brief overview and encourage you to visit the virtual meeting room for more detailed information.
- We appreciate you taking the time to join us on the video teleconference today and we look forward to receiving your input.