

OVERVIEW

This has been a challenging time for all of us, but the City of Yakima (City) and partners are continuing progress on the development of a multi-benefit project on the Naches River, as a part of the comprehensive Lower Naches River Coordination Partnership project efforts. The Nelson Dam Removal Project: Water Supply, Riverine Process, and Fish Passage Improvements (hereafter referred to as project) aims to improve fish passage for two ESA-listed species, bull trout and Middle Columbia River steelhead, as well as Coho salmon and Middle Columbia River Chinook salmon, improve sediment continuity to improve upstream and downstream habitat, increase flow conveyance to decrease flood risk for nearby landowners, and improve water supply reliability for four water purveyors. The project includes removal of Nelson Dam and the adjacent north bank fish ladder and construction of a natural roughened channel for fish passage, lowering of the north bank to reconnect the floodplain and decrease unnatural sediment retention thereby reducing upstream flood risk, the creation of two secondary fish passage channels to provide alternate passage routes during high flow events, consolidation of four existing water supply intakes into one newly constructed intake facility with a fish screen, and conveyance improvements associated with that water diversion consolidation. The project is currently progressing towards the 90% design level, has secured a significant portion of project funding, but needs significant additional funding to be implemented.

Spring 2020 (February – July)

- **Funding –**
 - The overall project implementation cost at 60% design (Phases 1 and 2) is estimated to be approximately \$24.6 million.
 - \$10,476,000 in construction funds have been secured from City of Yakima bond funding (\$7,500,000) and Ecology Floodplains by Design Program (\$4,476,000).
 - A funding request for \$4,134,000 was submitted to the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board in January 2020; the application is currently ranked 9th.
 - The current estimate of funding needed at 60% design is \$8.5 million.
 - The City anticipates receiving at least \$100,000 from the BOR for removal of the fish ladder.
 - Three federal agencies (USFWS, NOAA, BOR) have put Nelson forward in their internal agency stimulus infrastructure funding requests, however, stimulus infrastructure funding is speculative at this point.
- **Permitting –**
 - The USACE is the federal lead. The need for additional federal coverage (NEPA) for multiple federal nexus (including BPA and BOR) will require on-going coordination and may impact the project schedule.
 - HDR prepared a Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA), which contains the following:
 - Wetland and Stream Delineation Report,

- Functional Lift Assessment to demonstrate that the project will result in a net gain in ecological stream functions;
- Water Quality Monitoring Plan;
- JARPA Exhibits;
- JARPA supplement including detailed in-water work plan, impact minimization measures, and water quality protection measures.
- On February 28, 2020, the City submitted the following to multiple resource agencies:
 - JARPA and aforementioned attachments to the USACE, DNR, and Ecology.
 - A Biological Assessment (BA) and Essential Fish Habitat Assessment to USACE. The USACE submitted the document to the USFWS and NMFS approximately one week following initial submitted by the City.
- The USFWS and NMFS have been reviewing the BA and anticipate issuance of Biological Opinions in late summer 2020. A design documentation report will be submitted in July 2020 to enable the Services to continue their review and evaluation of project effects on ESA-listed species.
- The City submitted a SEPA Checklist to Yakima County in March 2020. The County, as SEPA lead, published the checklist for public comment in April 2020. The County issued a Determination of Non-Significance and a Shoreline Exemption on June 4, 2020.
- HDR has prepared draft responses and updated JARPA figures for the Hydraulic Project Approval. The City will apply for the HPA in summer 2020, following planned discussion with WDFW on specific project elements.
- **Design**
 - Construction drawings are being prepared in two phases of work: Phase 1 includes removal of Nelson Dam and existing facilities, construction of the roughened channel, grading of the left overbank, and construction of the concrete intake and sluiceway. Phase 2 includes construction of conveyance improvements required as part of the surface water intake consolidation objectives.
 - Design engineers have completed a number of documents commensurate with the 60% level of design including 60% construction drawings for Phase 1 and 2, updated opinions of construction costs for Phase 1 and 2, the Final Design Criteria Report, the Geotechnical Data Report, and the Geotechnical Design Criteria Report.
 - Several 60% design review meetings were held with the City and County in June and July 2019.

Summer 2020

- The City will apply for the HPA to WDFW.
- The City will continue to coordinate with Yakima County building department on building permit requirements for the proposed utility building at the new intake location.

- The City, County, and Design team will host a virtual 60% Project Update meeting for project partners, stakeholders, and interested parties August.
- Completion of the 60% Design Documentation Report will be completed by August.
- HDR will continue progress towards 90% design and environmental compliance documentation. 90% design completion is anticipated by the end of August.
- The City will continue to solicit input from BPA and BOR regarding NEPA responsibilities for each agency under the proposed action. BPA should evaluate if their responsibilities under NEPA can be covered under a Categorical Exclusion, or if project-specific NEPA documentation is required. Similarly, BOR should determine their NEPA responsibilities and engage with the City to work toward fulfilling them. The project schedule will be impacted if NEPA is required and NEPA responsibilities are not fulfilled in a timely manner.
- An approach to project effectiveness monitoring will be discussed with the City, County, and BOR this summer.