

***DRAFT* - FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**LOWER WILLAMETTE RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION**  
**FEASIBILITY STUDY AND INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

An Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the environmental considerations of the alternatives considered and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents the decision that no significant impacts to the human environment would occur if the proposed action is implemented. The draft EA and draft FONSI for the Lower Willamette River Ecosystem Restoration Project have been prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations as contained in 40 CFR Parts 1500 to 1508 and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Department of Army procedures for implementing NEPA found at 33 CFR Part 230.

**A. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternative Actions:**

The Final Integrated Feasibility Report/Environmental Assessment (FS/EA), dated October 2014, describes the proposed action as the recommended plan to restore approximately 101 acres of riparian habitats at five sites in the lower Willamette River for a cost of \$23,909,612. Section 6.0 of the FS/EA provides a detailed project description. The No Action Alternative was also evaluated wherein no restoration measures would be implemented under this authority. The final array of alternatives consisted of 5 project sites with a suite of measures at each site. The recommended plan was chosen from an array of nine best-buy alternative plans, including the No Action Alternative, and is acceptable to USACE and the non-Federal sponsor. The recommended plan will benefit multiple fish and wildlife species, including species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The restoration of off-channel, floodplain aquatic, riparian and wetland habitats, particularly hydrologic connectivity and fish access, will enhance natural floodplain processes including habitat formation.

**B. Public and Agency Coordination:**

A wide variety of stakeholders were involved in site selection and the development of restoration measures forming the alternatives evaluated in this feasibility study. Stakeholders included a number of Federal, state and local agencies as well as other interested parties and the project sponsor is the City of Portland. A series of stakeholder meetings occurred from 2001-2014.

The draft FS/EA was published for public and agency review on 23 September 2014. Following completion of the public review period, all comments received will be evaluated and summarized in Section 8.0. The FS/EA will then be finalized and, if appropriate, the FONSI will be finalized and signed by the District Commander.

**C. Summary of Environmental Resources and Impacts:**

Construction of multiple dams and revetments in the Willamette River basin has caused fundamental changes in natural riverine and floodplain processes and the habitats that sustain fish and wildlife populations are disappearing and have become degraded or developed. Section 3.0 of the FS/EA details the existing and forecasted environmental conditions in the project area. The types of effects of alternative action plans are similar to the recommended plan, although effects vary in scale amongst the alternatives. The effects of all plans, including the recommended plan, are beneficial in the long-term, although there will be adverse effects during construction. Section 7 consultation pursuant to the ESA has been completed with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is supportive of the recommended plan. The construction effects will be short-term, localized and temporary, and as such will have no long-term adverse effects on public health and safety. The temporary closure of pedestrian access at publicly accessible sites during construction will prevent a public safety hazard. Section 7.0 of the FS/EA provides additional details about the potential effects of the recommended plan.

**D. Facts and Conclusions:**

Based on the results of the impacts, it has been determined that no significant impacts would occur as a result of implementing the proposed action. The proposed action would not have any unavoidable adverse effects, nor would it result in the irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. Proceeding with the recommended plan would not significantly or adversely impact the affected environment. Additionally, no significant cumulative effects would be expected.

**E. Finding of No Significant Impact:**

I have reviewed the Lower Willamette River Ecosystem Restoration, Oregon, Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment, the information provided by interested parties, and the information provided in this Finding of No Significant Impact, and I find that the recommended plan will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, is not required.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jose L. Aguilar  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Commander