



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Portland District

PUBLIC NOTICE

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Steamboat Slough Wetland Restoration Project, Wahkiakum County, Washington

15 Day Notice

CENWP-PM-E-13-07

Issue Date: May 14, 2013

Expiration Date: May 29, 2013

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District is seeking public comment on the *Draft Environmental Assessment-Steamboat Slough Section 536 Project*. The United States Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, is proposing to restore tidal connection and fish access to 68 acres of historically tidal wetlands on the mainstem of the Columbia River. The Steamboat Slough project site is located within the mainland portion of the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer (JBH) in Wahkiakum County, Washington.

The purpose of the Steamboat Slough Habitat Restoration project is to restore ecological processes and tidal influence to floodplain habitat within the Columbia River estuary for the enhancement of juvenile salmonid rearing and refuge habitat. The area proposed for habitat enhancement is currently separated from the Columbia River by a levee. The proposed project would remove one section of the existing levee and lower a second section to allow Columbia River flows to inundate the historic floodplain. A setback levee will be built inland from the current levee to protect the majority of Columbian white-tailed deer at JBH prior to modification of the existing levee; the remainder of the original levee will remain in place. Channels and vegetative buffers will be constructed, allowing ingress/egress for juvenile salmonid-rearing and creating foraging habitat primarily for threatened fall Chinook salmon, threatened chum salmon, and threatened coho salmon.

Primary project goals and features include:

- Re-establish tidal connection between the Columbia River and the project site to restore estuarine floodplain habitats
- Provide access and rearing/refuge habitat for juvenile salmonids
- Restore tidal channel habitats
- Restore native wetland plant communities and functions to enhance productivity of the site

The project will be completed in the following stages:

- Construct setback levee
- Treat invasive plants
- Excavate channels
- Plant natives and install woody debris
- Modify existing levee
- Monitor

Environmental Document: The draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed activity is available for public review and comment on the Corps' Web site: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil>.

Additional Information and Comments: Questions or comments regarding the draft EA should be directed to Mr. Steve Helm, (503) 808-4778, Steve.R.Helm@usace.army.mil, or at the address below. Mailed comments must be postmarked by the above closing date and sent to:

District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineer District, Portland
Attn: CENWP-PM-E/Steve Helm
P.O. Box 2946, Portland, Oregon 97208-2946

In your response, please refer to the above public notice number (CENWP-PM-E-13-07), title, and date. A “no comment” response will be assumed if no response is received prior to or postmarked by the above expiration date.