

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSED
SWITZLER RESERVOIR PROJECT**

The Washington State Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Office of Columbia River, Klickitat County, and Benton County are initiating preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Ecology, Klickitat County and Benton County are co-lead agencies for this EIS that is being prepared in accordance with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

Description of Proposal:

Ecology's Office of Columbia River provided funding to the WRIA 31 Planning and Advisory Committee (PAC) to develop new water supplies through water storage within the Rock-Glade watershed, Water Resource Inventory Area 31 (WRIA 31). Through this grant, the PAC evaluated water demand within the Wood-Glade Planning area (locally known as the Horse Heaven Hills), and several water storage options. Through a Phase I and Phase II assessment, Switzler Canyon was identified as preferred new surface water storage site.

To meet existing demands along with new instream and out-of-stream demands, a new Columbia River off-channel surface water storage reservoir would be constructed in Switzler Canyon, with a peak storage capacity of approximately 44,000 acre-feet, through construction of a concrete-faced rockfill dam approximately 325 feet in height. Water would be diverted from the Columbia River during periods when water is available (when Chapter 173-563 WAC regulatory instream flow minimums are met), which is limited during dry water years and some months of average years. Columbia River surface water would be stored in Switzler Reservoir and later released from the reservoir as mitigation for new water supply when water is not available in the Columbia River to meet the demand. The maximum new mitigated supply that could be made available by the project was estimated assuming that at least 75% of the annual supply would be available with 100% reliability and that the total annual supply would be available with 90% reliability (9 out of 10 years). If a 200-cubic-feet per second (cfs) pump station is constructed to fill the proposed reservoir, it is estimated that approximately 31,000 acre-feet (75% of supply) with 100% reliability. In wet years, the full reservoir capacity of 44,000 acre-feet could be stored and used for supply.

The EIS will provide an evaluation of the alternatives and significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed surface water storage project.

The SEPA Checklist can be found at:

<http://www.klickitatcounty.org/1045/Switzler-Reservoir-Water-Storage-Project>

Additional information on this project including links to environmental documents can be found at: <http://www.klickitatcounty.org/DocumentCenter/Index/465>

Proponent: Klickitat County and Benton County, Washington

Location of Proposal: Switzler Canyon near, Plymouth, Washington

SEPA Lead Agencies: Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River; Klickitat County; and Benton County

SEPA Responsible Officials: G. Thomas Tebb, Mo-chi Lindblad, and Jerrod MacPherson

EIS Required: The lead agencies have determined this proposal may have probable significant adverse environmental impact(s). An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared. The lead agencies have identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS:

- Potential impacts of withdrawals from surface water bodies
- Potential impacts of discharging water to surface water bodies
- Possible long-term changes in water budget resulting from potential project impacts
- Potential impacts of increased water levels on jurisdictional shoreline areas and terrestrial habitat.

Scoping: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probably significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Written or electronic comments will be accepted through **October 22, 2018**.

Klickitat County Department of Natural Resources
Attention: Dave McClure, Director

127 West Court Street
Goldendale, WA 98620

Or by email to kcnaturalresources@klickitatcounty.org

Scoping Open House: The lead agencies have elected to expand the scoping process in accordance with WAC 197-11-410 to promote interagency cooperation, public participation, and innovative ways to streamline the SEPA process. To support this, two public open houses will be held:

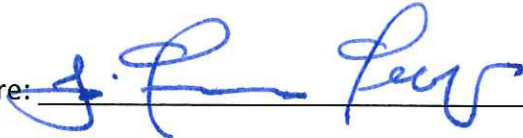
September 19, 2018, 4pm to 7pm
Klickitat County PUD Building
1313 S. Columbus Avenue
Goldendale, WA 98620.

September 20, 2018, 4pm to 7pm
Benton County Fairgrounds – Building 4
1500 South Oak Street
Kennewick WA 99337

Requests for sign language interpretation for the hearing impaired or other assistance needs should be submitted by Dave McClure, Klickitat County Department of Natural Resources, Telephone (509) 773-2410.

Responsible Official: G. Thomas Tebb
Position/Title: Director, Office of Columbia River
Phone Number: (509) 574-3989
Address: 1250 West Alder Street, Union Gap, WA 98903-0009

Date: August 14th, 2018

Signature: 

Responsible Official: Mo-chi Lindblad
Position/Title: Director, Klickitat County Planning Department
Phone Number: (509) 773-5703
Address: 228 West main Street, MS-CH-17, Annex 1
Goldendale, WA 98620

Date: August 14th, 2018

Signature: 

Responsible Official: Jerrod MacPherson
Position/Title: Planning Manager, Benton County Planning Department
Phone Number: (509) 786-5612
Address: P.O Box 910
Prosser, WA 99350

Date: August 15, 2018

Signature: 