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We are in an era of removing man-made structures from rivers to assist the aquatic community, specifically migratory fish. This project is contrary to these objectives of habitat restoration and Washington State investments of millions of dollars in salmon recovery.

The mitigation proposed is not commensurate with the FRE facility negative impacts. How can salmonid run population reductions and water quality degradation that is attributed directly to the construction of the FRE be mitigated? The answer is that these mitigations will not likely approach the damage inflicted by this FRE project and are more of a paper exercise to allow the FRE to be built. There is no possible mitigation to replace wild salmonid spawning in particular sections of a river and permanent changes in habitat. Salmonid spawning and habitat in one part of the river system is not equivalent to another, especially for sensitive species in a section of river that is largely undeveloped. The footprint of the FRE will degrade water quality even further than what is already existing by removing shade and riparian habitat in the relatively healthy and undeveloped headwaters of the Chehalis River. This will further exacerbate and likely delay any progress made on the temperature Cleanup Plan or total maximum daily load (TMDL) on the Chehalis River. Temperature and turbidity are major problems in the Chehalis, especially for the spring and early fall Chinook salmon runs that inhabit the Chehalis during peak temperatures.

The damage of the FRE is not worth the reward of reduced flood risk during extreme flood events that may never happen again (or every 2-4 decades), especially when these floods are within the natural floodplain. By choosing the FRE facility as a preferred option, you are making a choice against salmon recovery and habitat restoration. Human intervention is not always the best option when permanent impacts (i.e., aquatic communities) outweigh the benefits (i.e., occasional flood risk). Why do state agencies continue to push this when it has been rejected several times in the history of flood mitigation in this area?