

Anne March

I am opposed to the construction of the Chahalish Flood Retention Dam. Call it what it is - a dam.

The proposed dam is far larger than originally planned, requiring dramatically more concrete and infrastructure. Estimated costs are very high, with no clear funding plan — and no accounting for long-term operations, maintenance, or lifecycle costs. Large infrastructure projects of this complexity frequently exceed initial estimates.

The proposed site presents unresolved geotechnical challenges, including fractured bedrock, landslide risk, and potential faulting. A project of this size has not been built in the U.S. in decades, increasing uncertainty around construction timelines and outcomes.

The DEIS raises concerns about "significant and unavoidable" impacts to salmon runs, water quality, and treaty-protected Tribal rights. Construction would require extensive dewatering of the river, placing additional stress on already vulnerable fish populations.

The upper Chehalis River valley has significant potential for habitat restoration and community flood-proofing — work that can reduce flood risk while also supporting salmon recovery and community resilience. (Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative based on proven methodology is already being developed but is not being prioritized)

Finally, I remind you that this is 2026, not 1956, and much is known about A) the irreversible damage that dams like this cause and B) alternatives that work to achieve the same goals of preventing flooding.

Sincerely,

Anne March
La Grande, Oregon