

Elizabeth Fox

Please reconsider proposals to build this expensive project. As we have seen in Oregon, Vermont, and States in between, dams are a poor choice for flood control as they hurt salmon and steelhead runs, destroy wetlands, and siphon funding from better solutions.

I urge your department to look instead at the many other flood control alternatives that would enhance fish and wildlife habitat and provide a more stable, long-term solution. Alternatively, land use planning should be designed with a goal to limit development of wetlands nearby and work towards relocating existing structures wherever possible. Any decisions based in the LAND strategy should minimize the use of levees and other structures that might negatively impact fish habitat. Tribal communities input should also be incorporated into your decision.

As we saw here in Lincoln Co. Oregon with the massive slide into the Siletz River adjacent to the short rotation timber harvesting by Weyerhaeuser, forest practices do impact watershed stability. Without significant changes to their harvest practices, flooding events in the Chehalis watershed can and will be more frequent and severe. For example, Weyerhaeuser refused to do any part of the cleanup from this slide, but they won't allow our state highway move any of their valuable logs which are impeding cleanup of the slide onto the road and into the river. We lost a roadway due to their poor planning and refusal to recognize how logging and building roads on steep hillsides increases both erosion and overland flow and can cause rotational failures leading to massive landslides.

Our own property here near the Yaquina River has a stream that once was anadromous fish habitat but nearly a century of levees has wiped out much of that habitat. Instead, marginal hay and cattle rearing take place, mostly for tax write off purposes. Are we protected from floods? NO, because most of the flooding we are experiencing is coming from adjacent Weyerhaeuser logging operations. Even with our recent king tides, the Yaquina posed no threat of floods to us. Levees can work that way, too, impounding flooding from uplands. They create a closed system that justifies poor development decisions.

The upper Chehalis chinook population would become extinct should this dam be built, which would impact already near-endangered coastal chinook populations. Please consider incorporation many of the LAND alternatives instead, but limit levees. Thank you for your consideration.