

PUBLIC NOTICE
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Draft Environmental Assessment
Voights Creek Fish Hatchery Repair and Replacement Project
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Pierce County, Washington

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is proposing to provide financial assistance to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for a project approximately 2 miles southeast of the town of Orting in unincorporated Pierce County, Washington, on State Route 162. WDFW requested funding assistance for the repair and replacement of an existing but flood-damaged fish hatchery. The existing Voights Creek Fish Hatchery facilities were damaged during storms in January 2009. The event was declared a Presidential disaster on January 30th, 2009 (FEMA-1817-DR-WA).

The Voights Creek Fish Hatchery has been operating since the early 1900s and over the years has produced various salmonid and trout species. The existing site is entirely within the 100-year floodplain of Voights Creek and has experienced major flooding from several past presidentially declared disasters (1965, 1996, 1997, 2006, 2009), which have damaged the hatchery facilities over the years. During the January 2009 disaster event (January 6 through 16), record flooding occurred in the Voights Creek drainage as a result of torrential rains. Flood-borne woody debris and stream bedload in Voights Creek blocked an existing gravity intake structure that provides the main water source for hatchery operations. Voights Creek completely changed course, severing the connection of the intake to the water source. Other hatchery facilities were also damaged by the storm, including an access road and bridge.

The proposed project is to replace the existing flood-prone Voights Creek Fish Hatchery with a new hatchery outside the 100-year floodplain on Voights Creek. Relocating the hatchery facilities would avoid repetitive damage from future flood events and establish a more secure and reliable source of water for hatchery operations. Mitigation, in the form of stream, riparian and wetland enhancement, is proposed to offset project related environmental impacts. The project will conform to applicable state and local floodplain protection standards. The project has been approved for funding by the State Legislature and would be funded using state appropriations and federal FEMA funds.

A draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed project was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and FEMA's implementing regulations found in 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10. The EA evaluates alternatives for compliance with applicable environmental laws, including Executive Orders #11990 (Protection of Wetlands), #11988 (Floodplain Management), and #12898 (Environmental Justice). The alternatives evaluated include: Alternative A (No Action Alternative), Alternative B (Proposed Action), and Alternative C (Rebuild Hatchery Facilities in Place). The Proposed Action includes repair and relocation of the existing flood-prone fish hatchery complex outside the 100-year floodplain.

The Draft EA is available for viewing at the Pierce County Public Library, Orting Branch, 202 Washington Ave S, Orting, WA 98360; the FEMA website: <https://www.fema.gov/environmental-planning-and-historic-preservation-program/environmental-documents-public-notice-3> and the WDFW website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>

If no substantive issues are identified during the comment period, FEMA intends to finalize the EA, issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and fund the project. Unless substantive comments are received, FEMA will not publish another notice for this project. The Final EA and FONSI will be

available for viewing at the FEMA website noted above. Please submit your written comments to FEMA Region X Environmental Officer Mark Eberlein no later than 5 p.m. on April 16, 2013. Comments can be provided by any one of three methods:

1. Mailed: Mark Eberlein, Regional Environmental Officer, 130 228th Street SW, Bothell, Washington 98021
2. Faxed: 425-487-4613
3. E-mailed: mark.eberlein@fema.dhs.gov