

# LAND USE FACT SHEET



**Aberdeen**

*Photo Credit: Rollingbay Works*

## CHEHALIS BASIN STRATEGY PROGRAMMATIC EIS

This programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluates options to reduce flood damage and restore aquatic species habitat in the Chehalis River Basin.

These options are made up of actions, grouped into programs called alternatives.

The basin has experienced both major flooding and wide-spread degradation of aquatic species habitat. These problems have continued for almost 100 years without a coordinated response.

The Chehalis Basin Strategy will need to provide a long-term, integrated approach to positively effect change in the Chehalis Basin.

### Special accommodations

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## Programmatic EIS: How it's different

A programmatic State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review considers the effects of a broad proposal or planning-level decisions. The impact assessment in a programmatic EIS is more qualitative than a project-specific environmental review. Mitigation measures are also more general and focus on actions that could be implemented or might be required.

## How are impacts on land use analyzed?

The Chehalis Basin varies between different types of land, and uses of that land. The draft programmatic EIS looks at how individual actions and combined alternatives would affect land use and development in the basin.

LAND COVER TYPES	CHEHALIS BASIN	TYPES OF LAND USES
Agriculture	5%	Livestock grazing, farming, and commercial dairy operations
Forest, Grasslands, Wetlands	80%	Timber production, recreation
Developed	7%	Residential areas, shopping centers, industrial facilities
Bare Ground	8%	Gravel or sand bars (Grays Harbor), water, landslide areas, gravel pits

## Impacts analyzed, both beneficial and negative

In the draft EIS, Ecology identifies both short- and long-term impacts, whether they are beneficial or adverse. Potential negative impacts are explained and determined to be minor, moderate or significant.

Minor impacts are usually small, and easily mitigated. Moderate impacts are adverse, affect a relatively small area within the Chehalis Basin, and are not likely to exceed regulatory limits or criteria. Significant impacts affect relatively larger areas and are more severe. Impacts considered significant often exceed regulatory limits or criteria and are difficult to mitigate.

Barn in the Chehalis Basin.



*Photo credit: Rollingbay Works*

A built farm pad in Chehalis Basin.



*Photo credit: Rollingbay Works*

Interstate 5 freeway overpass at Mellen Street in Centralia



*Photo Credit: Anchor QEA*

## How would the action elements affect land use?

Impacts to land use from the action elements in the EIS range from beneficial to adverse and significant.

Aquatic Species Habitat actions would restore, and in some cases rebuild, riparian corridors on lands currently being used for agricultural, rural residential, or other land uses. This would result in minor to moderate impacts at a basin-wide scale, depending on the restoration scenario.

Local-Scale Flood Damage Reduction actions generally benefit land use; if carried out, important properties and a high percentage of homes in the floodplain would be flood-proofed or otherwise protected from flooding. Farm pads and livestock evacuation routes would benefit agricultural land uses, and Land Use Management changes could improve development patterns in the floodplain to avoid future flood damage. These changes would have a beneficial effect on land use by reducing flood damage.

Impacts from Large-Scale Flood Damage Reduction actions range from beneficial to significant, adverse impacts. Adverse impacts could include short-term impacts from construction and long-term impacts from permanent changes in conditions on the landscape.

## How would the combined alternatives affect land use?

Alternative 1 includes a dam and either a permanent or temporary reservoir, raising the Chehalis-Centralia Airport levee, and building a levee around low-lying portions of Aberdeen and Hoquiam. In total, Alternative 1 reduces flood reach in more area than the other action alternatives. However, decreased flooding in some floodplain areas could result in more urban development in floodplains, such as the Lewis County portion of the basin.

Alternative 2 could adversely impact land use where flood reach or depths increase upstream of new walls and levees, but benefit land use where flood damage is reduced.

Alternative 3 would not reduce flood damage at a basin-wide geographic scale, but would protect critical properties from flood damage. It would also protect some homes, commercial buildings, industrial properties or other structures in the Chehalis River floodplain from flooding through elevation, other flood-proofing measures, and buy-outs.

Alternative 4 would permanently move land uses and structures out of portions of the upper Chehalis Basin, which would reduce flood damage. However, moving existing floodplain uses out of the floodplain and into nearby uplands is considered a significant, adverse impact on land use.

This fact sheet provides a very general overview for public outreach purposes and does not include all aspects of the analysis. The detailed analysis, data, and findings are available in the draft EIS, Chapters 4 and 5 online at <http://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis-library/>.