



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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November 3, 2021

Dan Opalski, Director
Water Division, U.S. EPA Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98101
Sent by email only: Opalski.dan@epa.gov

Re: East Fork Lewis River Alternative Restoration Plan transmittal

Dear Dan Opalski:

The Department of Ecology transmits to EPA the [East Fork Lewis River Alternative Restoration Plan](#) (ARP) and [Bacteria and Temperature Source Assessment Report](#). This ARP identifies strategies and implementation actions to address warm water temperatures and bacteria pollution problems for 38 impaired segments on the 2012 Water Quality Assessment (303(d) list). These were identified as priorities under the national measure WQ-27. The ARP also includes the minimum elements of a Section 319 watershed-based plan.

We established the [East Fork Lewis River Partnership](#) in the summer of 2018 to develop the ARP and start implementing actions identified in the Source Assessment. Priorities for long-term implementation include addressing water quality impacts from septic systems, stormwater, and agriculture, and increasing riparian and streamflow restoration in the watershed. Public comment was completed in August 2020 and the final plan was published in October 2021.

Currently, multiple new projects and programs are underway in the watershed including the new Poop Smart Clark Pollution Identification and Correction program, which will help address agricultural, septic, and stormwater resources of pollution. All of the new programs help achieve water quality and salmon recovery goals.

Implementation actions currently underway include:

- 1. Proactive Nonpoint Source Investigation:** Ecology implemented proactive nonpoint source investigation and windshield surveys in tributaries with known pollution issues. This included

door-to-door outreach, sending mailers, and providing technical assistance to landowners.

2. **Targeted Workshops:** Local organizations committed to hosting annual agricultural and septic system workshops in the watershed to help increase awareness of water quality issues.
3. **Manure Lagoon Decommissioning:** Ecology identified a manure lagoon located directly upstream from a tributary with high bacteria levels. We worked with Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA), the City of Ridgefield, and a private developer to decommission and remove the manure lagoon, resulting in a large source of bacteria removed from the watershed.
4. **Monitoring:** New partnerships were established to implement nonpoint source bacteria monitoring to find and fix sources of bacteria. Results were published in the [East Fork Lewes River Watershed Bacteria Monitoring and Nonpoint Source Identification](#) report in 2021.
5. **Source tracing and IDDE:** Ecology supported the development of an interlocal agreement between the City of La Center and Clark County to implement microbial source tracking to confirm if bacteria in the city's stormwater system was coming from human, livestock, dogs, or wildlife sources. This has resulted in increased illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE) and bacteria source control work in the City of La Center. Multiple residential properties that had sanitary sewer connected to stormwater infrastructure were identified and corrected.
6. **New Pollution Identification and Correction Program (Poop Smart Clark):** Ecology staff have supported the development of a new Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program called Poop Smart Clark, which will begin implementation in State Fiscal Year 2022 (Federal Fiscal Year 2023). The goal of this program is to utilize monitoring to find and fix sources of bacteria pollution. Local partners have been awarded \$2.8 million dollars for implementation from USDA NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the Department of Ecology's Water Quality Combined Funding Program, the Washington State Conservation Commission, and the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board. The total funding award includes money to hire new staff, funding to administer a new septic system inspection and maintenance rebate program, and funding for agricultural site visits, private landowner technical assistance, and conservation planning to support agricultural BMP implementation. New education and outreach programs will also be developed. Intended outcomes from Ecology's SFY 2022 investment, expected by 2025 include:
 - **Outreach and education:** Approximately 1,965 direct mailers to landowners to educate on water quality BMPs.
 - **Door-to-door:** Targeted door-to-door outreach to 400 landowners with septic system or livestock challenges.
 - **Septic systems:** Implementation of 350 septic system inspection rebates and 140 septic for tank pumping rebates.

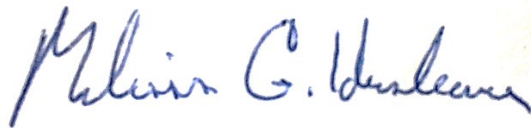
- **Agricultural technical assistance:** Completion of site visits and technical assistance to 30 agricultural landowners with livestock.
- **Conservation planning:** Development of conservation plans targeted towards water quality BMP implementation.

7. Temperature projects: The East Fork Lewis River is a high priority for salmon recovery in the Lower Columbia region. Significant acquisition and restoration work has already been completed in the watershed. Currently the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership is implementing a Thermal Assessment of the watershed to identify opportunities to restore cold-water refuge areas, with restoration alternatives expected by February 2022, and implementation to follow. Work to develop restoration alternatives for the Ridgefield Pits portion of the watershed between river miles 8 and 10 is also underway. Implementation of the preferred alternative for Ridgefield Pits is expected by 2025.

We believe that completion of the work detailed in the Alternative Restoration Plan will result in achieving water quality standards for temperature and bacteria in the East Fork Lewis River.

If you have any questions, please contact Devan Rostorfer, at devan.rostofer@ecy.wa.gov or (360) 409-6693.

Sincerely,



Melissa Gildersleeve
Watershed Management Section Supervisor
Water Quality Program

cc: Jill Nogi, EPA Region 10
Andrew Kolosseus, Ecology
Devan Rostorfer, Ecology