

SEPA 2026-0001
1/27/2026
Fee: \$0.00

SEPA Environmental Checklist

East Fork Deep River Restoration – Phase I

A. Background

Project Name: East Fork Deep River Restoration – Phase I

Applicant: Chuck Beyer, Director, Wahkiakum County Department of Public Works

Applicant Contact: P.O. Box 97, Cathlamet WA 98612 PHONE: 360-795-3301 EMAIL: beyc@co.wahkiakum.wa.us

Authorized Agent: Jay Horita, Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST)

Authorized Agent Contact: 818 Commercial Street, Suite 203, Astoria OR 97103 PHONE: 503-875-9333 EMAIL: jhorita@columbiaestuary.org

Date Checklist Prepared: 1/13/2026

SEPA Lead Agency: Wahkiakum County

Proposed timing of Construction: July 15 – September 30, 2026 (end of in-water work window)

Future Phases: There are two future phases related to this proposal. Phase II and III of this project will replace additional fish barriers and fix drainage infrastructure. We aim to address them at a future stage.

Environmental Information: Numerous reports have been prepared including Basis of Design Report (which outlines habitat conditions and physical/hydrological characteristics of the site), Cultural Resources Survey and Report, and permits such as the JARPA.

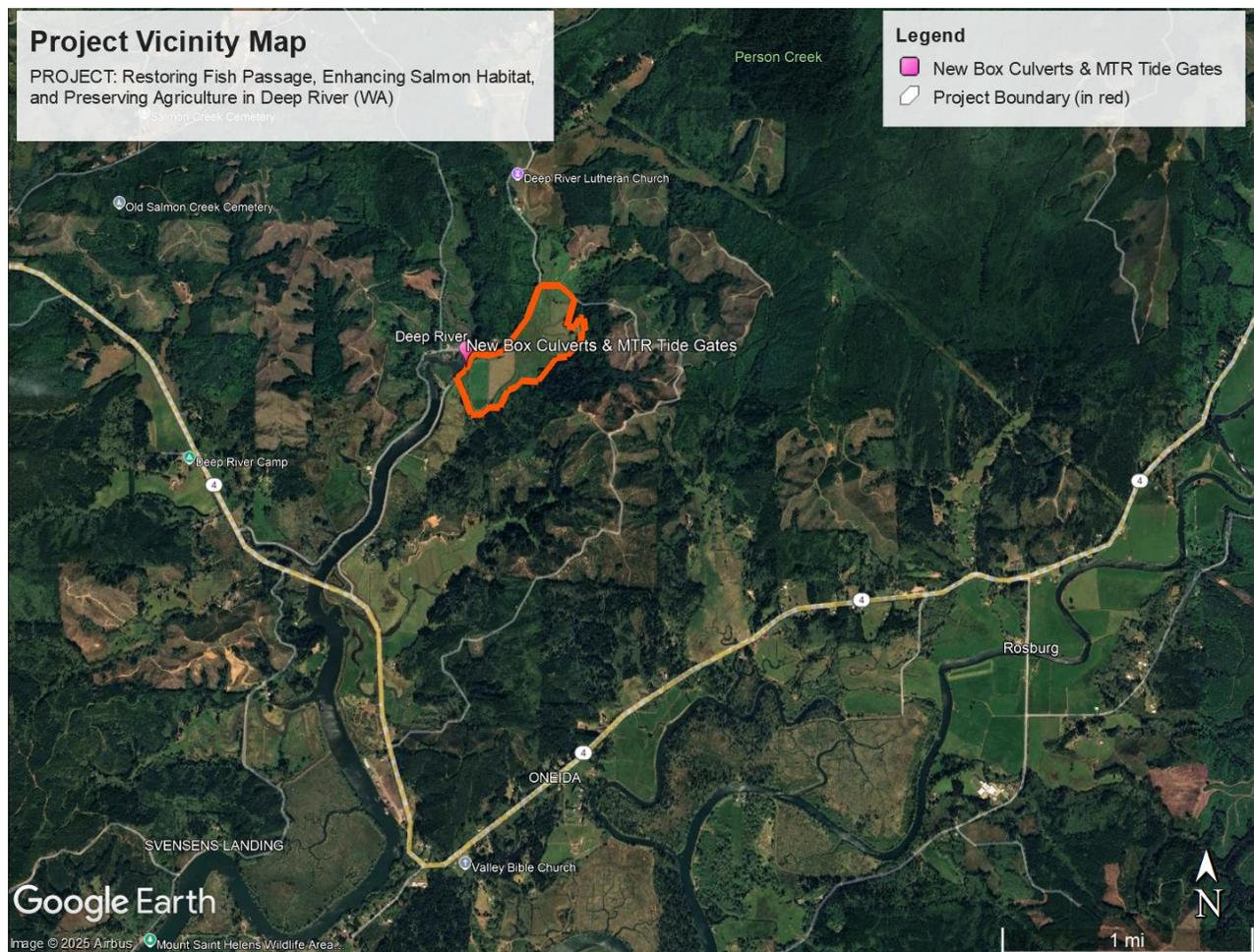
Other Pending Approvals: No known pending government approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by this proposal.

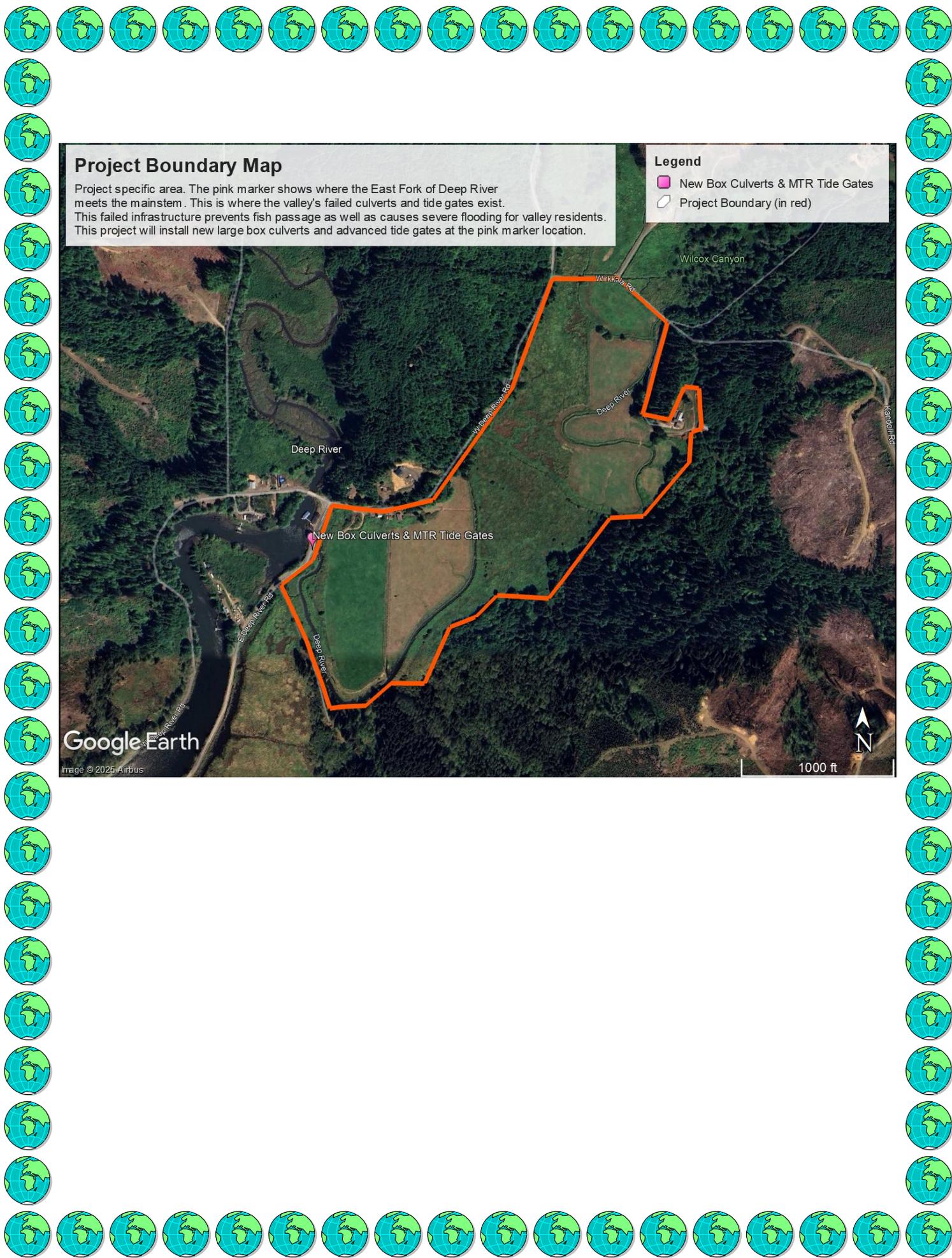
Permits/Approvals Needed: NEPA, SEPA, County Permits (Floodplain, shorelines), Section 106 Cultural Resources, WDFW HPA, Washington DOE WQC, USACE Nationwide Permits 27 + 14.

Brief Proposal Description: The East Fork Deep River Restoration – Phase I project is designed to restore tidal connectivity, improve fish passage, and address chronic flooding issues affecting the Deep River valley. Work includes the replacement of failed tide gates and undersized structures with fish-passable Muted Tidal Regulator (MTR) gates and a

series of box culverts, raising road elevations to reduce overtopping during flooding events, and floodplain benching to improve riparian wetland habitat for fish and wildlife. Excavated material will be thin spread over low-lying hayfields ensure positive drainage and reduce fish stranding potential.

Project Location: 354 W DEEP RIVER RD, Naselle WA 98638
Section 17, Township 10, Range 08
Coordinates : 46.347308 N / -123.688012 W



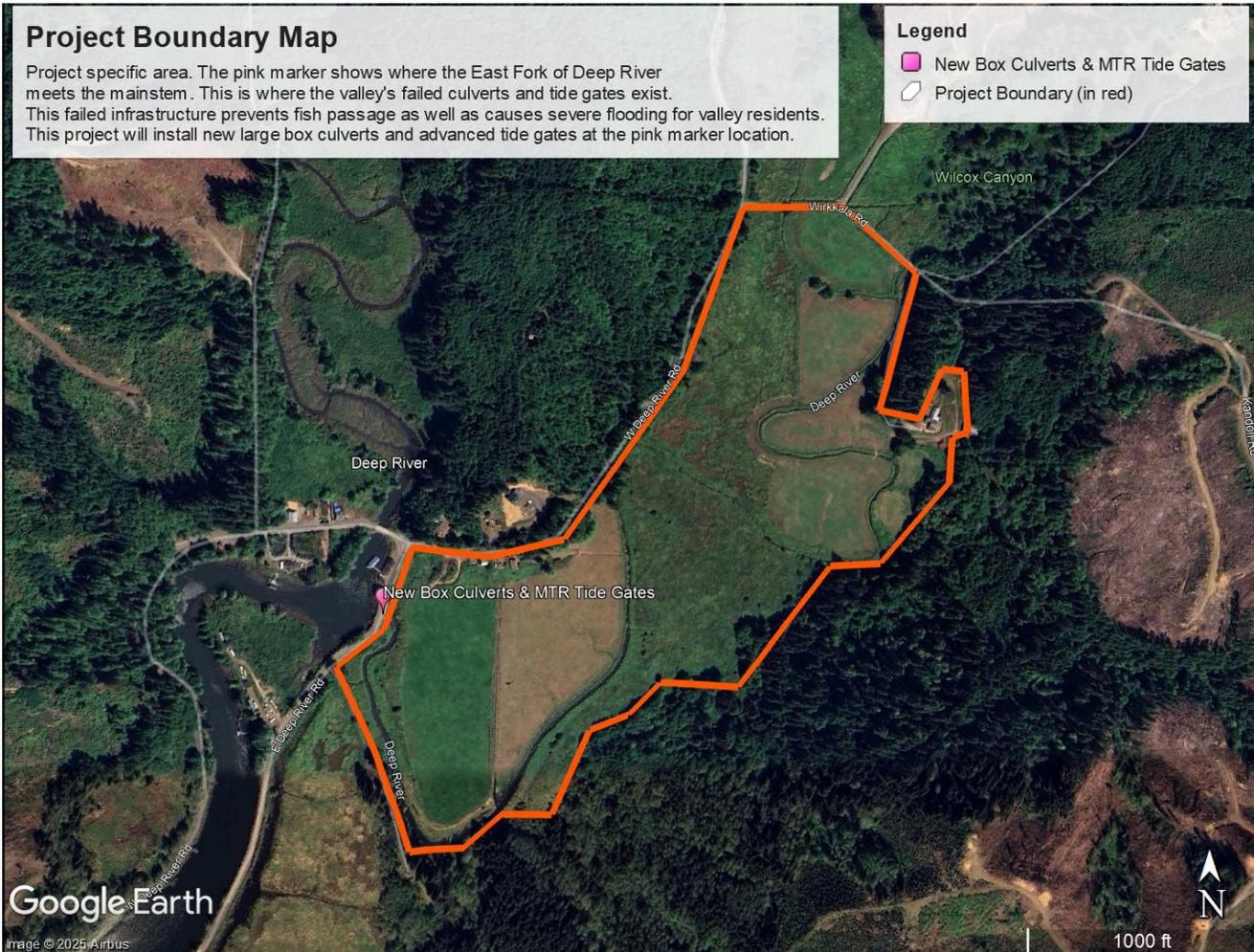


Project Boundary Map

Project specific area. The pink marker shows where the East Fork of Deep River meets the mainstem. This is where the valley's failed culverts and tide gates exist. This failed infrastructure prevents fish passage as well as causes severe flooding for valley residents. This project will install new large box culverts and advanced tide gates at the pink marker location.

Legend

-  New Box Culverts & MTR Tide Gates
-  Project Boundary (in red)



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B. Environmental Elements

Earth

- a. General description of the site:

The project area consists of low-gradient tidal floodplain pasture and wetland habitat.
- b. Steepest slope on site:

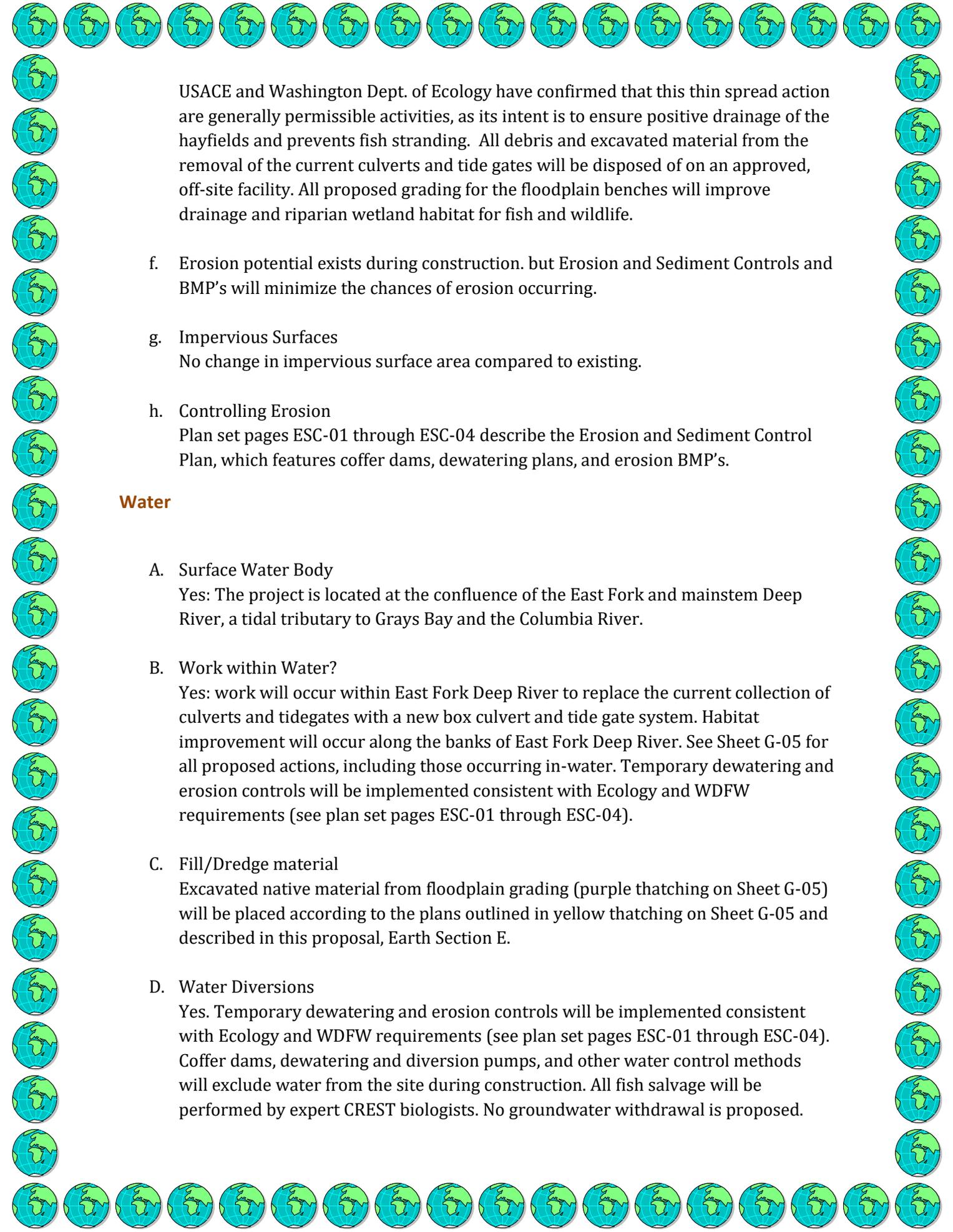
Most of the project area has floodplain gradients between 0.5 and 2%. The site lies in a tidal floodplain with extremely low relief. The steepest slopes on site are E Deep River Road's road prism side slopes.
- c. Soils

The project area is located within the low - lying tidal floodplain of the East Fork Deep River and consists primarily of hydric alluvial soils formed from silts, clays, and organic muck deposited by historical tidal and fluvial processes. Typical mapped soil series within the project vicinity include Coast Range silt loam, Grays River silty clay loam, and Clatskanie silt loam, which are moderately to poorly drained soils with high organic content and seasonal saturation. These soils support wet pasture and hayfield uses, as well as emergent wetland vegetation in lower areas.

Some portions of the site are mapped as prime farmland soils when drained and protected from flooding; however, the land has functioned primarily as low - productivity pasture due to persistent inundation and drainage limitations. The project's earthwork will not remove these soils from agricultural potential but will instead regrade and thin - spread native excavated material to improve positive drainage and reduce fish stranding in the lower hayfields. This action will maintain the overall soil resource onsite while enhancing hydrologic function and fish habitat.
- d. Unstable Soils

No known unstable soils within the immediate project boundaries. Upland slopes are outside the project boundary.
- e. Fill/Excavation/Grading

Excavation and fill are required for restoration and infrastructure work. 8,457 CY of fill and 7,429 CY of cut are proposed within wetlands, and 230 CY of fill and 2,400 CY of cut below the OHWM. Excavated floodplain material will be thin spread to a depth of approximately 3.5 inches (2.5 inches or less compacted) spread over the lower Oatfield and Malerich hayfields. Please note that the current plan sets show a 7-inch thin spread over the Oatfield pasture. This will be altered to a 3.5 inch spread over the Oatfield and Malerich lower pastures. Pre-file application meetings with

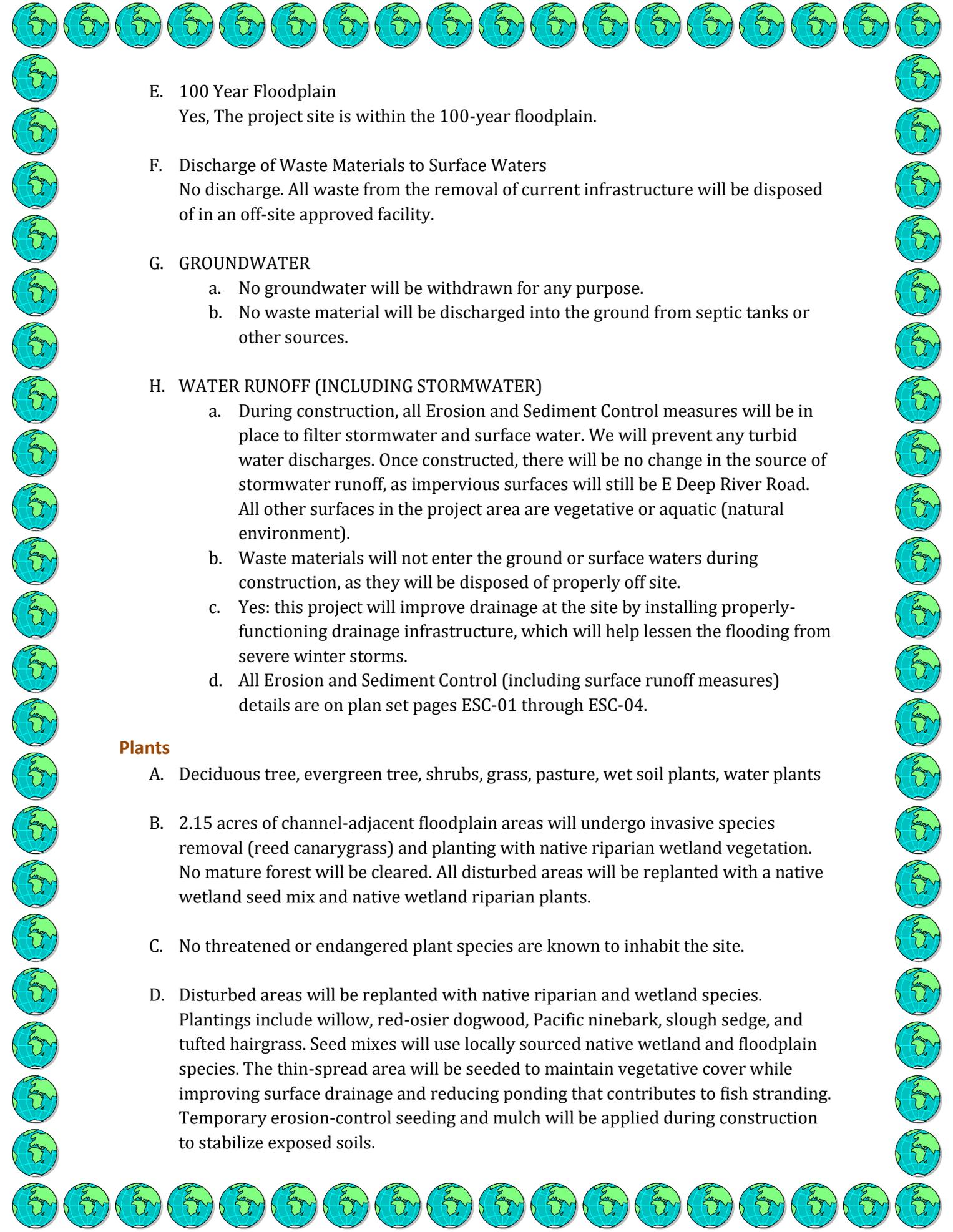


USACE and Washington Dept. of Ecology have confirmed that this thin spread action are generally permissible activities, as its intent is to ensure positive drainage of the hayfields and prevents fish stranding. All debris and excavated material from the removal of the current culverts and tide gates will be disposed of on an approved, off-site facility. All proposed grading for the floodplain benches will improve drainage and riparian wetland habitat for fish and wildlife.

- f. Erosion potential exists during construction. but Erosion and Sediment Controls and BMP's will minimize the chances of erosion occurring.
- g. Impervious Surfaces
No change in impervious surface area compared to existing.
- h. Controlling Erosion
Plan set pages ESC-01 through ESC-04 describe the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, which features coffer dams, dewatering plans, and erosion BMP's.

Water

- A. Surface Water Body
Yes: The project is located at the confluence of the East Fork and mainstem Deep River, a tidal tributary to Grays Bay and the Columbia River.
- B. Work within Water?
Yes: work will occur within East Fork Deep River to replace the current collection of culverts and tidegates with a new box culvert and tide gate system. Habitat improvement will occur along the banks of East Fork Deep River. See Sheet G-05 for all proposed actions, including those occurring in-water. Temporary dewatering and erosion controls will be implemented consistent with Ecology and WDFW requirements (see plan set pages ESC-01 through ESC-04).
- C. Fill/Dredge material
Excavated native material from floodplain grading (purple thatching on Sheet G-05) will be placed according to the plans outlined in yellow thatching on Sheet G-05 and described in this proposal, Earth Section E.
- D. Water Diversions
Yes. Temporary dewatering and erosion controls will be implemented consistent with Ecology and WDFW requirements (see plan set pages ESC-01 through ESC-04). Cofferdams, dewatering and diversion pumps, and other water control methods will exclude water from the site during construction. All fish salvage will be performed by expert CREST biologists. No groundwater withdrawal is proposed.



E. 100 Year Floodplain

Yes, The project site is within the 100-year floodplain.

F. Discharge of Waste Materials to Surface Waters

No discharge. All waste from the removal of current infrastructure will be disposed of in an off-site approved facility.

G. GROUNDWATER

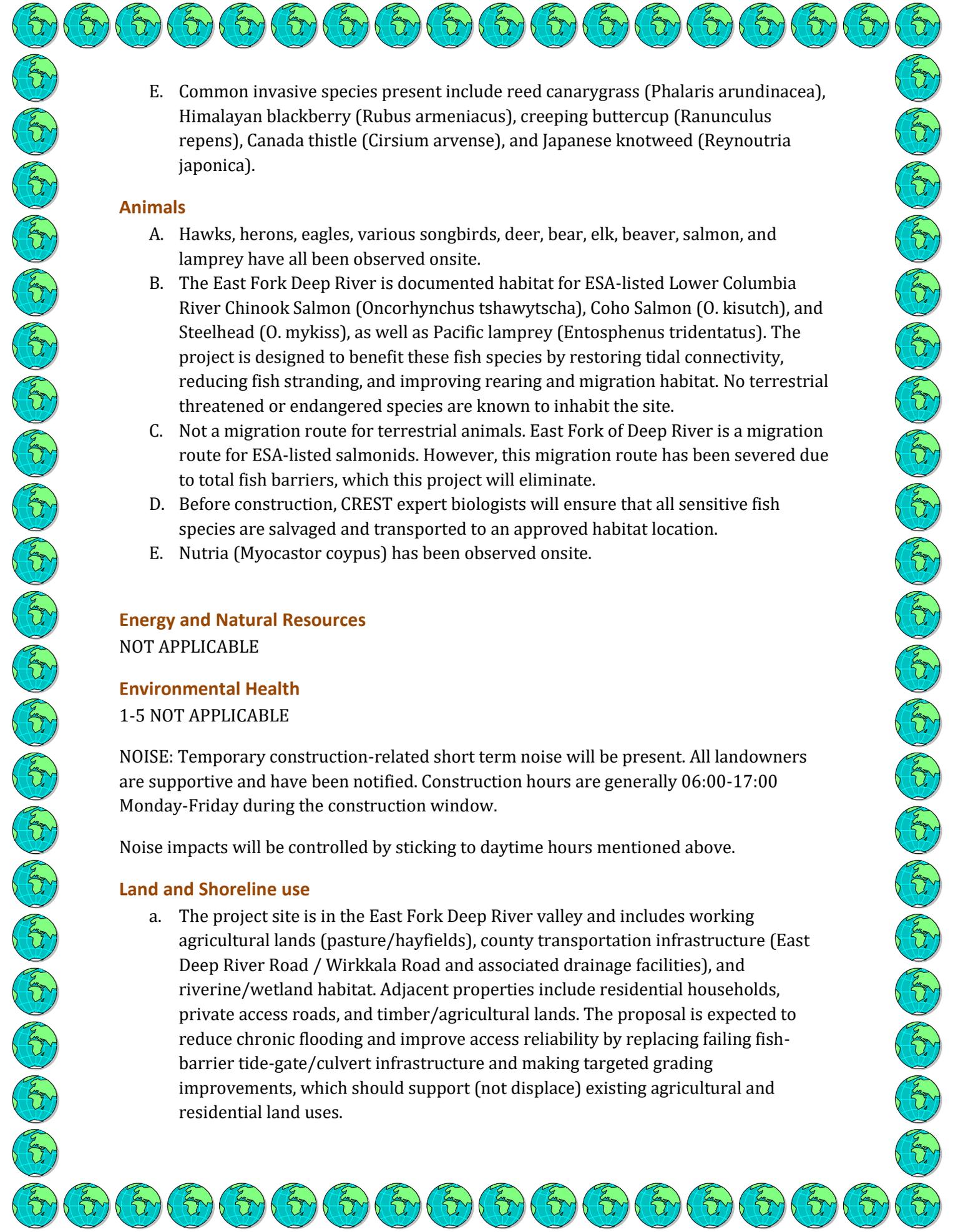
- a. No groundwater will be withdrawn for any purpose.
- b. No waste material will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources.

H. WATER RUNOFF (INCLUDING STORMWATER)

- a. During construction, all Erosion and Sediment Control measures will be in place to filter stormwater and surface water. We will prevent any turbid water discharges. Once constructed, there will be no change in the source of stormwater runoff, as impervious surfaces will still be E Deep River Road. All other surfaces in the project area are vegetative or aquatic (natural environment).
- b. Waste materials will not enter the ground or surface waters during construction, as they will be disposed of properly off site.
- c. Yes: this project will improve drainage at the site by installing properly-functioning drainage infrastructure, which will help lessen the flooding from severe winter storms.
- d. All Erosion and Sediment Control (including surface runoff measures) details are on plan set pages ESC-01 through ESC-04.

Plants

- A. Deciduous tree, evergreen tree, shrubs, grass, pasture, wet soil plants, water plants
- B. 2.15 acres of channel-adjacent floodplain areas will undergo invasive species removal (reed canarygrass) and planting with native riparian wetland vegetation. No mature forest will be cleared. All disturbed areas will be replanted with a native wetland seed mix and native wetland riparian plants.
- C. No threatened or endangered plant species are known to inhabit the site.
- D. Disturbed areas will be replanted with native riparian and wetland species. Plantings include willow, red-osier dogwood, Pacific ninebark, slough sedge, and tufted hairgrass. Seed mixes will use locally sourced native wetland and floodplain species. The thin-spread area will be seeded to maintain vegetative cover while improving surface drainage and reducing ponding that contributes to fish stranding. Temporary erosion-control seeding and mulch will be applied during construction to stabilize exposed soils.

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- E. Common invasive species present include reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*).

Animals

- A. Hawks, herons, eagles, various songbirds, deer, bear, elk, beaver, salmon, and lamprey have all been observed onsite.
- B. The East Fork Deep River is documented habitat for ESA-listed Lower Columbia River Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Coho Salmon (*O. kisutch*), and Steelhead (*O. mykiss*), as well as Pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*). The project is designed to benefit these fish species by restoring tidal connectivity, reducing fish stranding, and improving rearing and migration habitat. No terrestrial threatened or endangered species are known to inhabit the site.
- C. Not a migration route for terrestrial animals. East Fork of Deep River is a migration route for ESA-listed salmonids. However, this migration route has been severed due to total fish barriers, which this project will eliminate.
- D. Before construction, CREST expert biologists will ensure that all sensitive fish species are salvaged and transported to an approved habitat location.
- E. Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) has been observed onsite.

Energy and Natural Resources

NOT APPLICABLE

Environmental Health

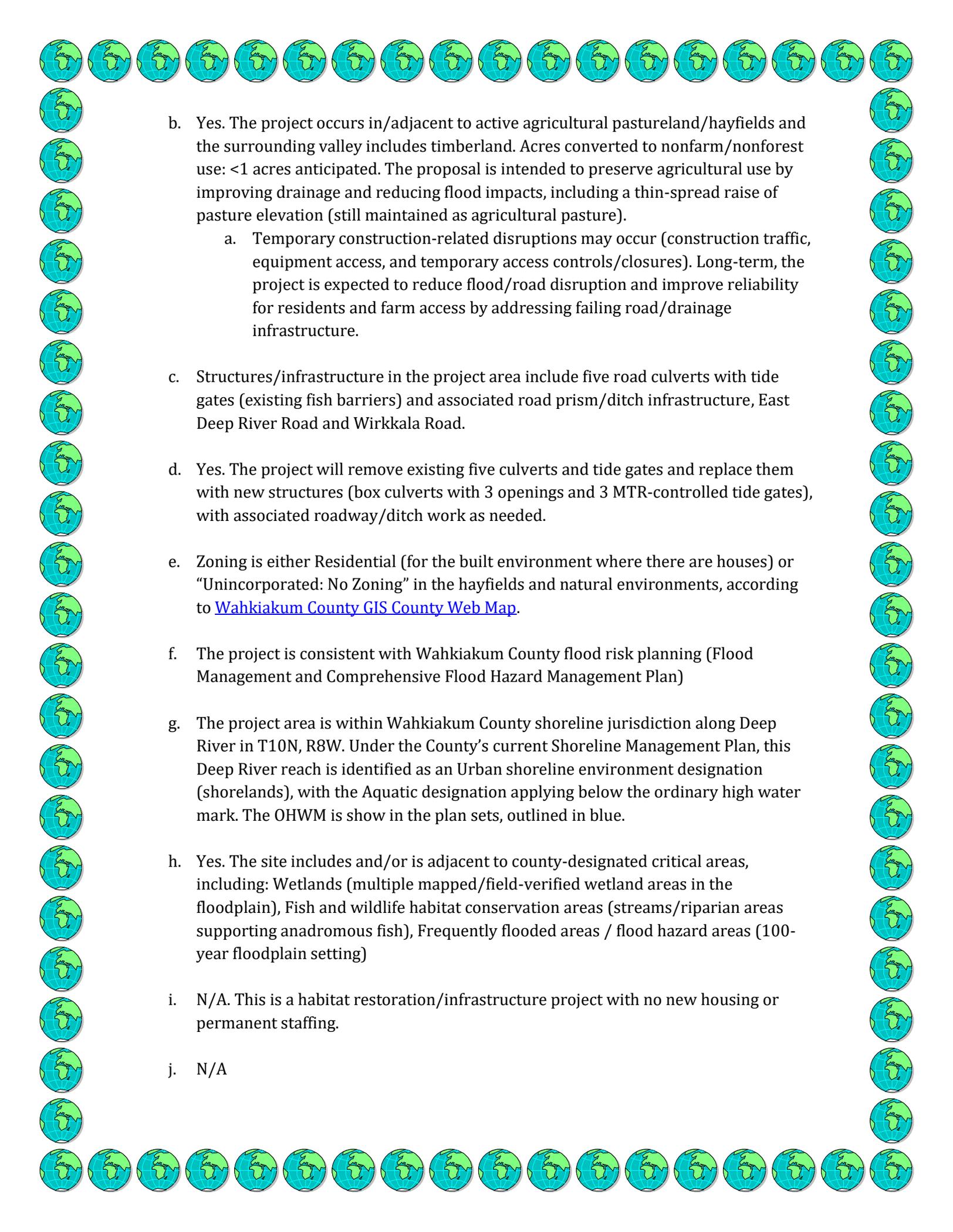
1-5 NOT APPLICABLE

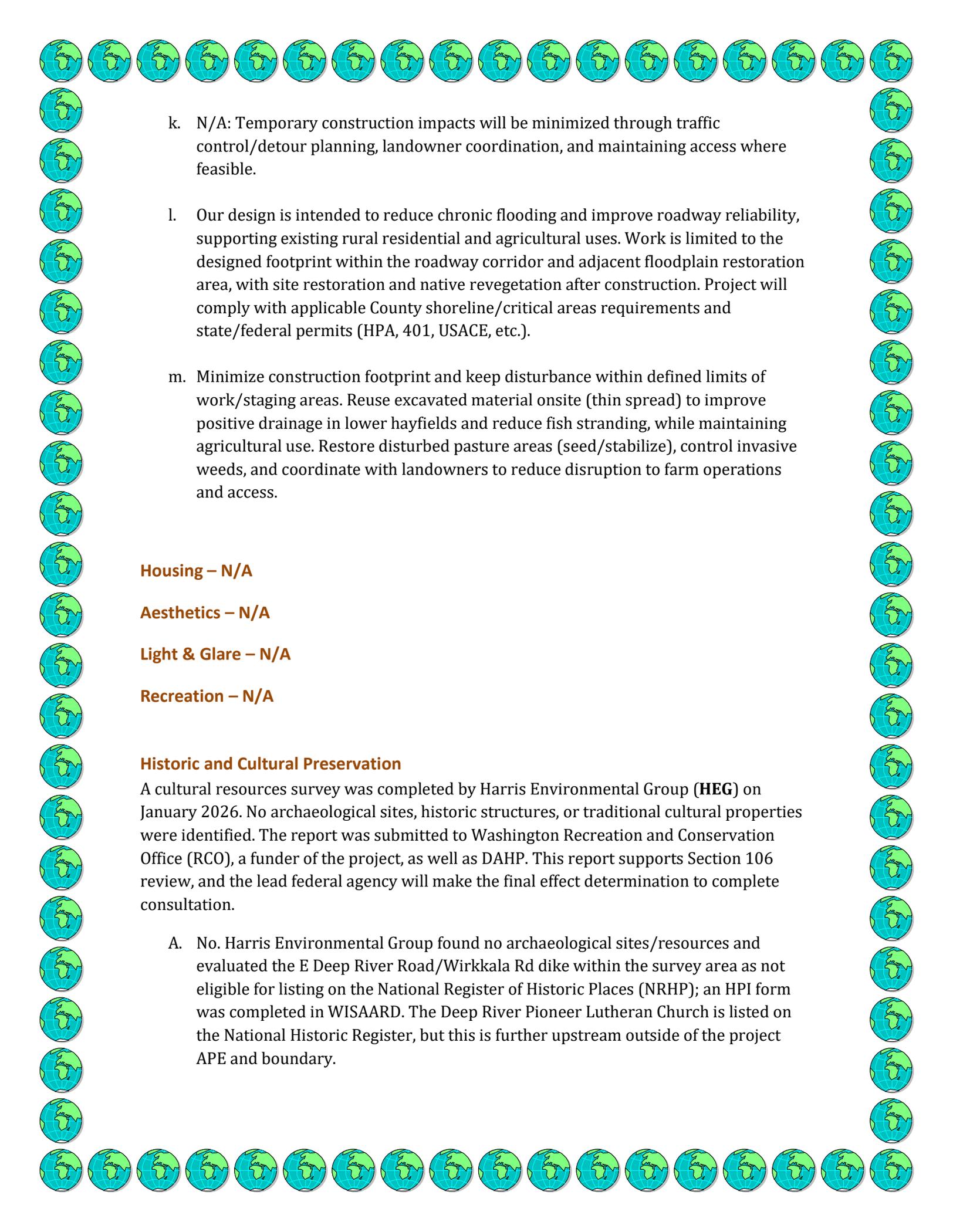
NOISE: Temporary construction-related short term noise will be present. All landowners are supportive and have been notified. Construction hours are generally 06:00-17:00 Monday-Friday during the construction window.

Noise impacts will be controlled by sticking to daytime hours mentioned above.

Land and Shoreline use

- a. The project site is in the East Fork Deep River valley and includes working agricultural lands (pasture/hayfields), county transportation infrastructure (East Deep River Road / Wirkkala Road and associated drainage facilities), and riverine/wetland habitat. Adjacent properties include residential households, private access roads, and timber/agricultural lands. The proposal is expected to reduce chronic flooding and improve access reliability by replacing failing fish-barrier tide-gate/culvert infrastructure and making targeted grading improvements, which should support (not displace) existing agricultural and residential land uses.

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- b. Yes. The project occurs in/adjacent to active agricultural pastureland/hayfields and the surrounding valley includes timberland. Acres converted to nonfarm/nonforest use: <1 acres anticipated. The proposal is intended to preserve agricultural use by improving drainage and reducing flood impacts, including a thin-spread raise of pasture elevation (still maintained as agricultural pasture).
 - a. Temporary construction-related disruptions may occur (construction traffic, equipment access, and temporary access controls/closures). Long-term, the project is expected to reduce flood/road disruption and improve reliability for residents and farm access by addressing failing road/drainage infrastructure.
 - c. Structures/infrastructure in the project area include five road culverts with tide gates (existing fish barriers) and associated road prism/ditch infrastructure, East Deep River Road and Wirkkala Road.
 - d. Yes. The project will remove existing five culverts and tide gates and replace them with new structures (box culverts with 3 openings and 3 MTR-controlled tide gates), with associated roadway/ditch work as needed.
 - e. Zoning is either Residential (for the built environment where there are houses) or “Unincorporated: No Zoning” in the hayfields and natural environments, according to [Wahkiakum County GIS County Web Map](#).
 - f. The project is consistent with Wahkiakum County flood risk planning (Flood Management and Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan)
 - g. The project area is within Wahkiakum County shoreline jurisdiction along Deep River in T10N, R8W. Under the County’s current Shoreline Management Plan, this Deep River reach is identified as an Urban shoreline environment designation (shorelands), with the Aquatic designation applying below the ordinary high water mark. The OHWM is show in the plan sets, outlined in blue.
 - h. Yes. The site includes and/or is adjacent to county-designated critical areas, including: Wetlands (multiple mapped/field-verified wetland areas in the floodplain), Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (streams/riparian areas supporting anadromous fish), Frequently flooded areas / flood hazard areas (100-year floodplain setting)
 - i. N/A. This is a habitat restoration/infrastructure project with no new housing or permanent staffing.
 - j. N/A

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- k. N/A: Temporary construction impacts will be minimized through traffic control/detour planning, landowner coordination, and maintaining access where feasible.
 - l. Our design is intended to reduce chronic flooding and improve roadway reliability, supporting existing rural residential and agricultural uses. Work is limited to the designed footprint within the roadway corridor and adjacent floodplain restoration area, with site restoration and native revegetation after construction. Project will comply with applicable County shoreline/critical areas requirements and state/federal permits (HPA, 401, USACE, etc.).
 - m. Minimize construction footprint and keep disturbance within defined limits of work/staging areas. Reuse excavated material onsite (thin spread) to improve positive drainage in lower hayfields and reduce fish stranding, while maintaining agricultural use. Restore disturbed pasture areas (seed/stabilize), control invasive weeds, and coordinate with landowners to reduce disruption to farm operations and access.

Housing – N/A

Aesthetics – N/A

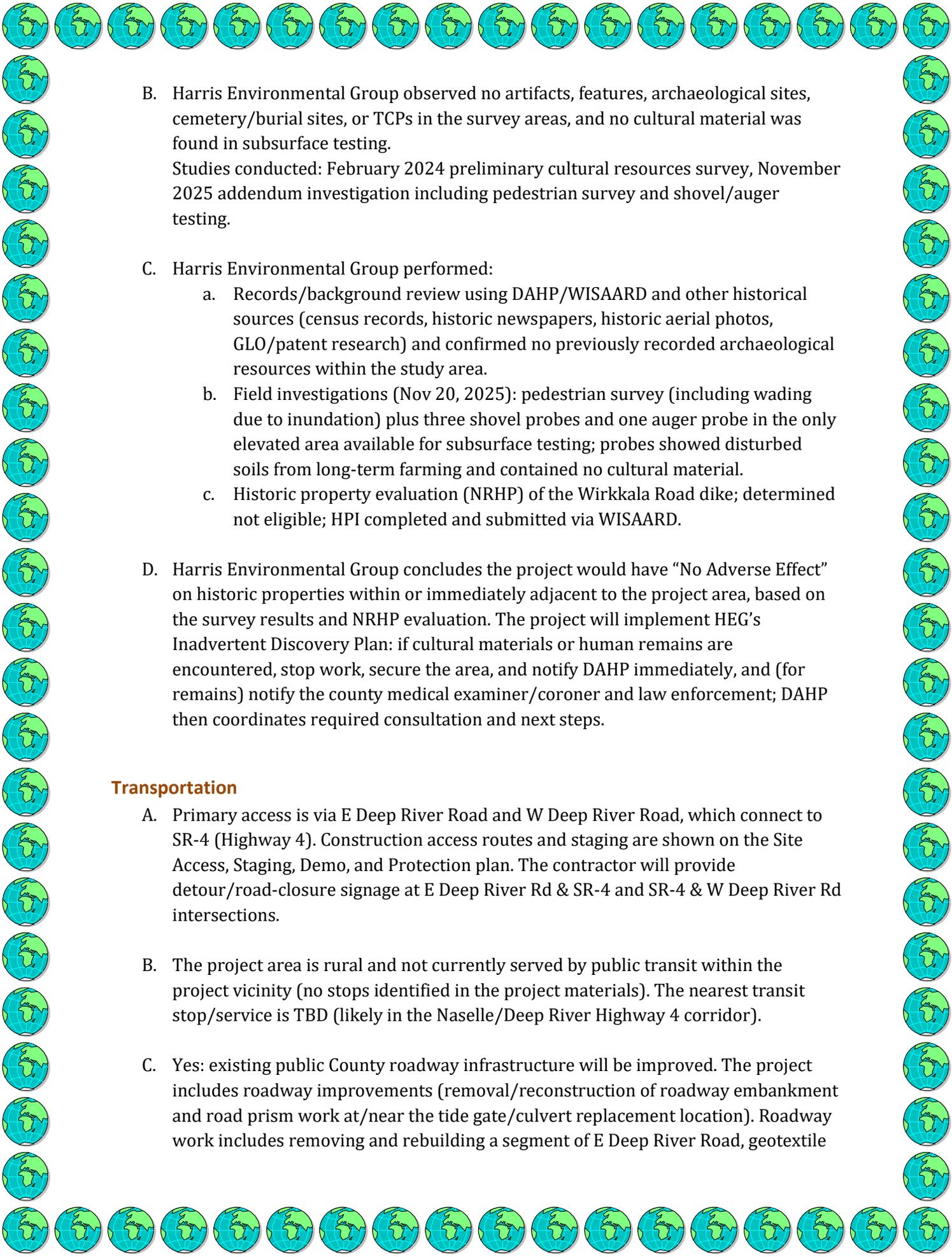
Light & Glare – N/A

Recreation – N/A

Historic and Cultural Preservation

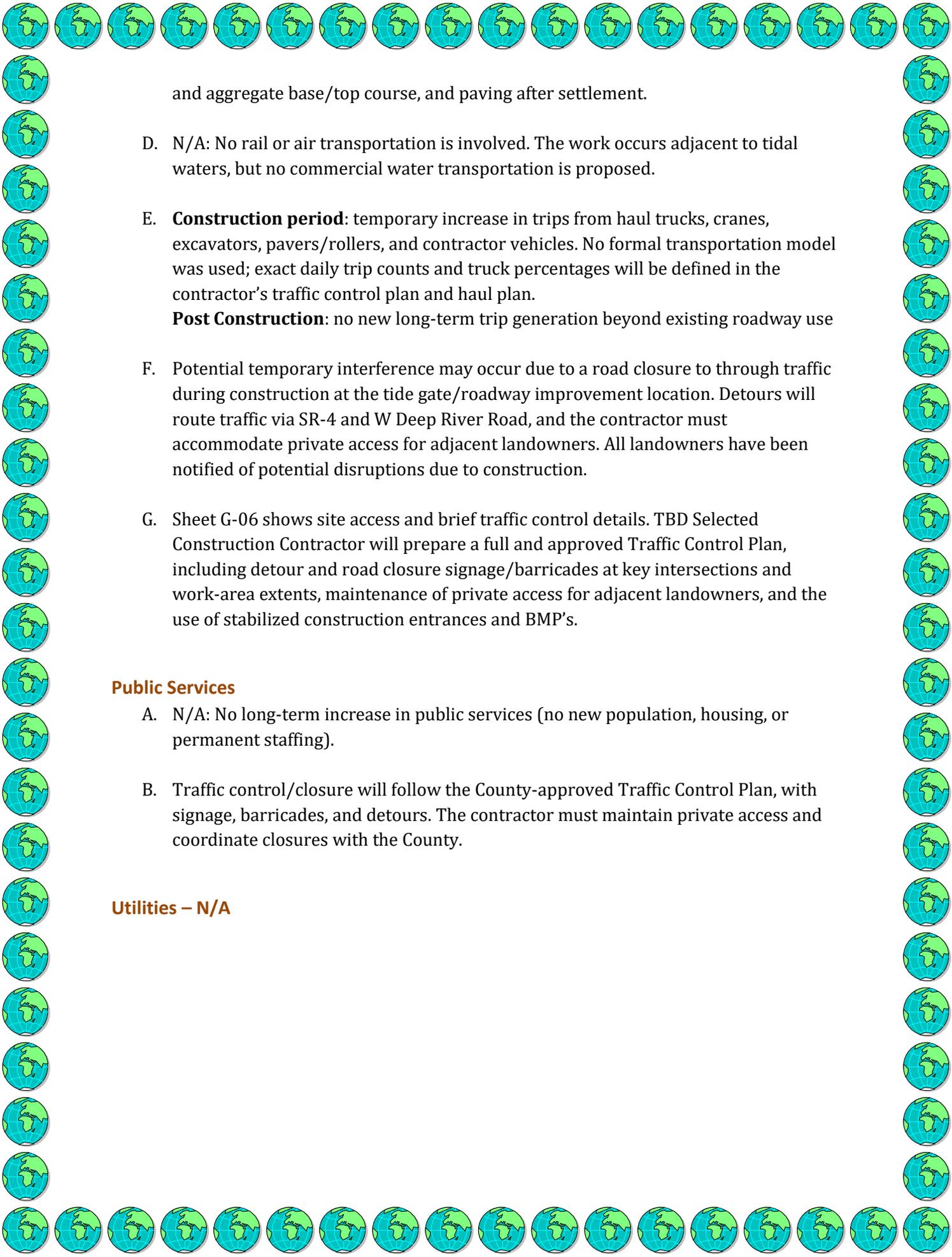
A cultural resources survey was completed by Harris Environmental Group (**HEG**) on January 2026. No archaeological sites, historic structures, or traditional cultural properties were identified. The report was submitted to Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), a funder of the project, as well as DAHP. This report supports Section 106 review, and the lead federal agency will make the final effect determination to complete consultation.

- A. No. Harris Environmental Group found no archaeological sites/resources and evaluated the E Deep River Road/Wirkkala Rd dike within the survey area as not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); an HPI form was completed in WISAARD. The Deep River Pioneer Lutheran Church is listed on the National Historic Register, but this is further upstream outside of the project APE and boundary.

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- B. Harris Environmental Group observed no artifacts, features, archaeological sites, cemetery/burial sites, or TCPs in the survey areas, and no cultural material was found in subsurface testing.
Studies conducted: February 2024 preliminary cultural resources survey, November 2025 addendum investigation including pedestrian survey and shovel/auger testing.
- C. Harris Environmental Group performed:
- Records/background review using DAHP/WISAARD and other historical sources (census records, historic newspapers, historic aerial photos, GLO/patent research) and confirmed no previously recorded archaeological resources within the study area.
 - Field investigations (Nov 20, 2025): pedestrian survey (including wading due to inundation) plus three shovel probes and one auger probe in the only elevated area available for subsurface testing; probes showed disturbed soils from long-term farming and contained no cultural material.
 - Historic property evaluation (NRHP) of the Wirkkala Road dike; determined not eligible; HPI completed and submitted via WISAARD.
- D. Harris Environmental Group concludes the project would have “No Adverse Effect” on historic properties within or immediately adjacent to the project area, based on the survey results and NRHP evaluation. The project will implement HEG’s Inadvertent Discovery Plan: if cultural materials or human remains are encountered, stop work, secure the area, and notify DAHP immediately, and (for remains) notify the county medical examiner/coroner and law enforcement; DAHP then coordinates required consultation and next steps.

Transportation

- Primary access is via E Deep River Road and W Deep River Road, which connect to SR-4 (Highway 4). Construction access routes and staging are shown on the Site Access, Staging, Demo, and Protection plan. The contractor will provide detour/road-closure signage at E Deep River Rd & SR-4 and SR-4 & W Deep River Rd intersections.
- The project area is rural and not currently served by public transit within the project vicinity (no stops identified in the project materials). The nearest transit stop/service is TBD (likely in the Naselle/Deep River Highway 4 corridor).
- Yes: existing public County roadway infrastructure will be improved. The project includes roadway improvements (removal/reconstruction of roadway embankment and road prism work at/near the tide gate/culvert replacement location). Roadway work includes removing and rebuilding a segment of E Deep River Road, geotextile

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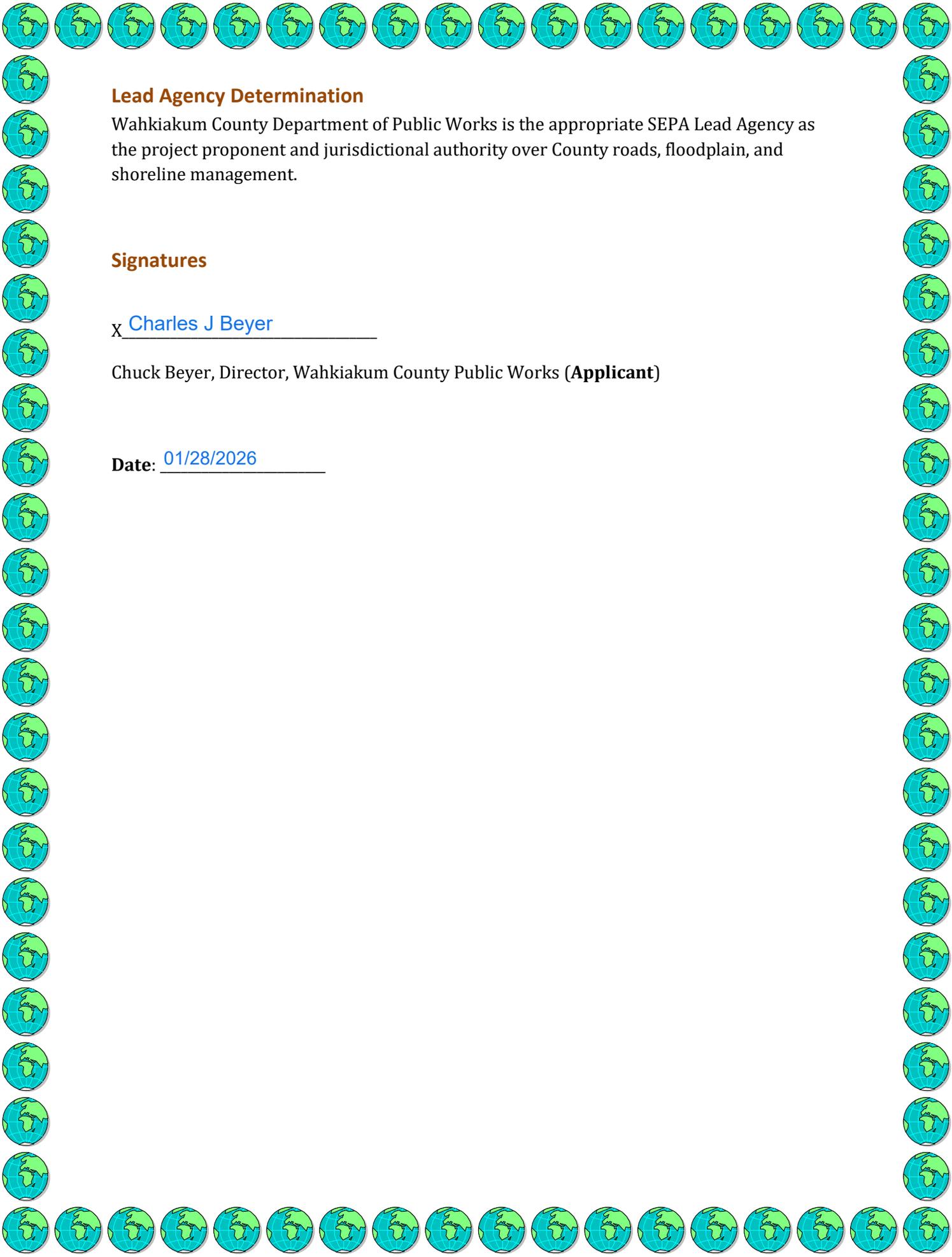
and aggregate base/top course, and paving after settlement.

- D. N/A: No rail or air transportation is involved. The work occurs adjacent to tidal waters, but no commercial water transportation is proposed.
- E. **Construction period:** temporary increase in trips from haul trucks, cranes, excavators, pavers/rollers, and contractor vehicles. No formal transportation model was used; exact daily trip counts and truck percentages will be defined in the contractor's traffic control plan and haul plan.
Post Construction: no new long-term trip generation beyond existing roadway use
- F. Potential temporary interference may occur due to a road closure to through traffic during construction at the tide gate/roadway improvement location. Detours will route traffic via SR-4 and W Deep River Road, and the contractor must accommodate private access for adjacent landowners. All landowners have been notified of potential disruptions due to construction.
- G. Sheet G-06 shows site access and brief traffic control details. TBD Selected Construction Contractor will prepare a full and approved Traffic Control Plan, including detour and road closure signage/barricades at key intersections and work-area extents, maintenance of private access for adjacent landowners, and the use of stabilized construction entrances and BMP's.

Public Services

- A. N/A: No long-term increase in public services (no new population, housing, or permanent staffing).
- B. Traffic control/closure will follow the County-approved Traffic Control Plan, with signage, barricades, and detours. The contractor must maintain private access and coordinate closures with the County.

Utilities – N/A

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Lead Agency Determination

Wahkiakum County Department of Public Works is the appropriate SEPA Lead Agency as the project proponent and jurisdictional authority over County roads, floodplain, and shoreline management.

Signatures

X Charles J Beyer

Chuck Beyer, Director, Wahkiakum County Public Works (**Applicant**)

Date: 01/28/2026