

APPENDIX E: Finding of No Significant Impact



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 3755
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98124-3755

CENWS-PM-ER

**2011 Nisqually Park Levee Rehabilitations
Pierce County, Washington**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

1. Background. Under Public Law 84-99 emergency response authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (Corps), in concert with Pierce County, Washington is proposing to repair the Nisqually Park levee (River Mile 67.6 to 68.6) on the Nisqually River, Pierce County, Washington. Repairs are intended to address damage caused during flooding. Flooding occurred on the Nisqually River in November 2008 with a 13-year flood event occurring at the National gauge. Intense rainfall and rapid snowmelt were a result of a high velocity jet stream which is a common weather pattern experienced in this region.

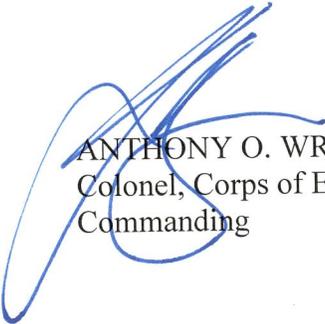
2. Proposed Action. The preferred alternative is to repair the damaged areas of the Nisqually Park Levee to the pre-flood level of protection. Repairs will increase the size of the armor rock, including excavating 10 to 12 feet below the toe of the levee to create a buried 10 to 15 ton rock. The riverward face of the levee would be regraded to a 3H: 1V slope. This would be overlain with a spalls filter layer and a blanket of 2 to 4 ton rock armor. Heavy loose riprap would be mixed with the toe and face rock to achieve satisfactory compaction and fit of the materials. Placement of the toe rock would require diverting the water away from the work site into an ancillary channel to complete the repair in the dry. This is required for safety during construction but would also minimize adverse effects on water quality and fisheries resources. Two potential berm locations with three potential diversion channels have been identified with final selection being made just prior to construction based on minimizing length of diversion and effort of excavation. Vegetation on the riverward face if the levee will be removed to complete the repair, but vegetation on the backslope will not be removed. Disturbed areas will be hydroseeded with native grasses to encourage vegetative growth.

3. Impacts Summary. The attached environmental assessment provides an evaluation of the potential environmental impact as a result of the Preferred Alternative (repairing the levee in place). Impacts from the rehabilitation action are limited. Specifically, a few overstory trees will be removed to repair the riverward face of the levee. The limited loss of trees in this heavily forested area will not cause a significant change to the distribution, character, or abundance of riparian vegetation in the reach. Temporary and localized impacts to turbidity and fish are anticipated due to the dewatering of the site. Fish salvage efforts and turbidity monitoring will be completed during construction. Temporary impacts are expected from noise and vibration disturbance created by use of machinery. Air quality impacts will be *de minimis*. The Corps has provided documentation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (20 April 2011) with a finding of **may affect, but not likely to adversely affect** marbled murrelet. The primary impact to murrelets will be noise disturbance during nesting; however surveys have shown no suitable nesting habitat within a 35-yard buffer of the work area so that impacts will be minimal. The

Corps coordinated the cultural resources investigations and compliance with the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Washington State Historic Preservation Office to ensure their awareness and opportunity to provide concerns and comments on Usual and Accustomed fishing rights, cultural resource impacts, and general environmental impacts. No wetlands will be filled or impacted during the rehabilitation of the levee. The project is within the Mount Rainier National Park and will impact recreation and aesthetics in the project vicinity during the construction period. The repair includes placement of larger toe rock that is expected to limit future repairs and maintains the current levee placement so that cumulative effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions are not expected to be significant.

4. Conclusion. I find that the proposed action will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts and complies with all applicable laws, regulations, and agency consultations including the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, and National Environmental Policy Act, as well as Executive Orders. Based on the analysis described above and provided in more detail in the accompanying Environmental Assessment, this project is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of human environment and, therefore, does not require preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Date 16 JUNE 2011



ANTHONY O. WRIGHT
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Commanding