**Eastside Dungeness River Community Profile**

The Eastside Dungeness River Community is a scenic area of rural land that is east of the Dungeness River and is bounded to the south and west by the Olympic Mountains, to the east by the City of Sequim, and to the north by the Strait of Juan de Fuca on the Olympic Peninsula in eastern Clallam County. The area consists of larger parcels ranging from 2.5 to 40 acres in size. The climate is very mild and dry compared to the Seattle area. The area lies within the Rain Shadow of the Olympic Mountains and receives on average less than 16 inches of rain each year, which is about the same amount as Los Angeles, California. This climate anomaly is sometimes called the "Blue Hole of Sequim”. For example, Seattle averages 38 inches of rain/yr and western Clallam County, the area of the vampire “Twilight” series, receives about 120 inches/yr.

Water supply is a major concern for this area considering its low precipitation. Eastern Clallam County is already suffering from increased climate change impacts. It is projected that total spring and summer season streamflow in the Puget Sound region will decrease by 24–31% on average by the end of the century. The UW Climate Impact Group projects that the average snowpack in Washington will decline by 56 to 70% by the 2080s. Drought in the Dungeness has already made its impact felt in 4 of the past 8 summers, providing empirical evidence on potential future conditions. This is of particular concern for most of the shallow wells in this rural area where most homes are on a well or share a well and are not connected to a Group A public water system. WA Ecology has stated that the Dungeness area has one of the highest densities of permit-exempt wells in Washington. That is one of the reasons that all new permit exempt wells in the area must mitigate for any new water use to ensure that the aquifers and streamflows are not overused (Elwha-Dungeness Instream Flow Rule WAC 173-518). Stored water from the Reservoir could be used for aquifer recharge to increase water levels in the shallow aquifer and augment flows in local streams, and generate additional mitigation credits for the Dungeness Water Exchange, a local water bank that provides mitigation for new development.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the region became crisscrossed with water canals to allow successful agriculture in this dry climate. There are three major water canal companies east of the Dungeness River (HID, DID, and SPTA). These three companies provide water to more than 3200 acres of farmland. This water allows farmers to contribute to the $12 million to the Clallam County agriculture economy. It was these water companies that changed the dry prairie into farmland starting in 1896. To commemorate this major change and the value the water canals bring to the area, there is a festival that is held generally every May since 1896 and is complete with a parade, queen and her royal court, logging show, and fireworks. This year will be the 127th year of the Irrigation Festival, which is touted as Washington’s oldest and longest running festival (http://irrigationfestival.com/history/).

Farms in this area produce fruit crops including raspberries, blackberries and a wide variety of other organic fruits and vegetables. Clallam County along with Skagit County to the east in Washington produces most of the brassica (cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, etc.) seeds grown in the world. The area is also noted for raising horses, goats, llamas, and dairy cattle and for producing hay, grains, and lavender. In fact, due to the unique climate, the cultivation of lavender has been a commercial success, making Sequim the “Lavender Capital of North America”, rivaled only by the lavender in France. There is even a Lavender Festival in July to celebrate lavender (https://sequimlavender.org/event/sequim-lavender-weekend-2022/).

Using Census 2020 block data, it is estimated that there are 11,812 people downgradient of the Reservoir that will be impacted favorably by the Reservoir. This is 15% of the Clallam County population (77,155 2020 population). This is likely a conservative value considering the positive impacts to the Dungeness River, eastside farmed acres, food produced, and the recharge to the aquifers, and the recreational value of a new 396 acre park.

Income data retrieved from the American Community Survey indicates that within 2 miles down gradient of the Reservoir, there are about 2,512 people with a weighted median income of $44,405.13. This income is significantly lower than Washington state ($78,687) and US ($65,712) median income, 56% of Washington median income and 68% of the US median income. As of February 2022, the unemployment rate for Clallam County was 6.6% while the unemployment rate for Washington was 4.3% and the US was 3.8%. The area downgradient of the proposed Reservoir is too small to have an official unemployment rate but is likely similar to that of the County.

Using 2020 Census block information, it was determined that the populations downgradient of the Reservoir was 14% non-white. Native Americans make up 13% of the non-white population downgradient of the Reservoir. The Reservoir project has significant positive benefits in particular to the Native American population. It is likely that the Native Americans are mostly part of the local Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe that inhabited the area long before the arrival of the first Europeans. The Tribe was named after one of its predominant leaders, Lord James Balch. The Jamestown Tribe and other North American population are dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Dungeness River resources – to restore and maintain river flows to allow aquatic species to live and thrive. In 1855, the Jamestown Tribe entered into a Treaty with the Unites States specifically reserving the “right of taking fish at the usual and accustomed grounds and stations”. To guarantee that water levels in the Dungeness River will support salmonid species, in the face of climate change and population growth, the construction of the Dungeness Off-channel Reservoir will ensure sufficient streamflows for critical species over the long-term. Enhancing stream habitat directly correlates to increased fish yields on the Dungeness River and smaller streams.

This project will help support the continued viability of agriculture in the Dungeness River Valley, particularly in the face of changing climate and resulting water availability concerns. Providing water security by utilizing stored waters offers an opportunity for those farms to continue to contribute to the more than $12 million Clallam County agricultural economy and retain the jobs associated with those farms. Additionally, there will be construction jobs that result from the development of this project and value added jobs resulting from accommodating the needs of the construction workers. Moreover, it is anticipated that up to 3.0 FTE new positions will be created to support Reservoir and park operations when this project is complete. This will all help the unemployment in this region.

The underserved Eastside Dungeness Community will benefit by aforementioned local economic development associated with this project, enhanced streamflow and habitat conditions for salmonids, sustainable water supplies for agriculture and development, availability of construction jobs, and the amenity of a new County park for recreation, health and open space.