



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Schlossberg, Brown, Carlson, Barofsky and McRae
FROM: Lisa Krentz, Electric Generation Manager; Mark Zinniker, Generation Engineering Supervisor; and Adam Spencer, Communications Specialist
DATE: December 3, 2021
SUBJECT: Leaburg Canal Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (2021 Organizational Goal 4b)
OBJECTIVE: Information Only

Issue

This memo outlines the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for evaluating the social impacts of a Triple Bottom Line (TBL) assessment of prospective changes at the Leaburg-Walterville Hydroelectric Project, as well as the strategy to disseminate decision criteria, project updates, and the Board's eventual decision on the future of the Leaburg Canal.

Background

The Leaburg Canal has been operating as a stormwater conveyance facility since October 2018, following observations of increased seepage and internal erosion of the canal embankments that prompted EWEB to dewater the canal and cease power generation. In response to new information on earthquake safety risks, EWEB initiated a comprehensive assessment of the entire canal in late 2019 to better understand the level of investment that would be required to ensure long term safe and reliable operation.

EWEB staff prepared a preliminary TBL assessment (presented to the Board on [August 3, 2021](#)) so the Board may better understand the environmental, social, and economic impacts of two near-term (current license term) options:

1. **Return to Service (RTS)** – Repair and/or rebuild portions of the Leaburg Canal as necessary for safe power generation.
2. **Convert to Stormwater Conveyance (SWC)** – No diversion of the McKenzie River into the canal, and repair and/or rebuild portions of the canal as necessary for safe stormwater conveyance to the river.

The preliminary TBL suggests that the SWC option is favorable for financial, public safety, and some environmental reasons in the near term. It is the lower cost option, significantly reduces the likelihood and effect of a catastrophic structural failure and restores a more natural flow regime in the McKenzie River, which generally benefits fish and improves mainstem water quality.

The RTS option is favorable from a local community/social impact perspective because it preserves a locally owned, low-carbon electric generation facility, and prolongs neighbors' ability to access water from the canal for irrigation.


Pursuit of either scenario has implications for the long-term decision to either decommission or relicense the project. In order to provide the Board with enough information to make an informed decision on the near-term path forward by the fourth quarter of 2022, EWEB staff will expand the TBL with more detailed analyses of the social, environmental, and financial impacts of the decision, including an evaluation of decommissioning relative to relicensing.

Discussion

Stakeholder Groups & Engagement Levels

EWEB Staff has identified internal and external stakeholder groups and developed outreach plans that assign appropriate public participation goals based on each group’s role in impacting the decision. The project team will focus on empowering EWEB’s elected Commissioners by providing the information they need to ultimately make the final decision as representatives of the public. As part of that effort, we will inform and consult with our ratepayers to identify social impacts.

We have assigned the levels of engagement to each stakeholder group, as outlined by the International Association for Public Participation’s Spectrum of Public Participation:

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Targeted engagement levels for Leaburg stakeholders are as follows:

Stakeholder Group	Level of Engagement	Key Messages, Goals
EWEB Commissioners, EWEB Executive Team	Empower	Equip with information to make decision, provide communications collateral to explain project and TBL findings to constituents, employees
EWEB Employees	Collaborate	Gather ideas, input, and ground-truth proposals, provide communications collateral to explain

		project and TBL to customers
Directly-Impacted Stakeholders: Canal Irrigators, Fish Hatcheries, Canal Neighbors	Involve	Ensure Directly-Impacted Stakeholders understand the effects of each decision to their unique properties, operations, and livelihoods, and involve representatives in planning to mitigate effects and improve outcomes
EWEB ratepayers in Eugene and the McKenzie Valley	Consult	Educate customers about the history of the Leaburg Canal, the challenges to its structural integrity, and the findings of TBL assessment. Consult with customers to determine the weight of social impact considerations, including rate, recreation, local economic, and irrigation implications
Other Community Groups: McKenzie River Guides, Area Farmers, Leaburg Lake & Canal Recreationalists, Neighborhood Organizations	Inform	Connect with local Community Groups to leverage communication networks to educate broader community about the Canal's current issues, decision pathways and implications, and how the public can stay informed about the project's progress

Goals & Objectives

While the Board's decision may imply economic, environmental, and social impacts for each Stakeholder Group, the decision is ultimately the Board's to make. Each group will have opportunities to provide varying levels of feedback to inform the Board's decision, including testifying in public meetings, responding to surveys to evaluate group preferences, corresponding with project managers, and observing the Leaburg Canal in guided tours. Our goal is to make sure all stakeholders understand that the Board is thoroughly deliberating the future of the canal before their eventual decision is reached, to inform all groups transparently with the background necessitating the decision, and that each group understands their roles and limitations in contributing to the TBL assessment.

- **Internal Stakeholders Objectives:**

- EWEB Commissioners and Executive Team are adequately informed about TBL process and project updates, have the tools to communicate to constituents, customers, and employees, and are empowered to make a well-considered decision.
- EWEB employees are informed of the progress and have a clear understanding of how they can support the decision by providing background information and input. Employees find out about project updates before hearing about them from external sources, and they know how to collaborate with and advise the project team.

- **External Stakeholders Objectives:**

- Through informing and engaging community, we will properly assess, weigh, and rank the social impacts of the decision compared to the financial and environmental impacts, and will accurately relay that information to the Board. Imminent social impacts of the project are carefully and thoroughly explained, including potential mitigation efforts.
- Through communicating TBL progress and the Board's ultimate decision, our objective is to ensure rate payers throughout EWEB's service territory feel adequately informed, McKenzie Valley residents are engaged in community events and have ample opportunity to express how each decision would impact them, and key stakeholders receive the appropriate level of involvement in the decision-making process.

Key Messages

- The Leaburg Canal has helped power the development of the McKenzie Valley and Eugene areas and has served our community with clean and reliable hydropower for nearly 100 years. Due to its age, it has structural deficiencies that must be addressed. **Therefore, we are investigating the financial, environmental, and social costs to decide whether we should:**
 - **Return to Service (RTS)** - restore the Leaburg Canal's ability to provide hydropower generation in both the near (current license term) and long term (future relicensing), or
 - **Storm Water Conveyance (SWC)** – indefinitely cease power generation and only repair the canal's ability to function as a tributary of the McKenzie River and carry water from run-off and creeks to the river.
- EWEB's Commissioners have the sole authority over this decision and drive the organization to provide a complete analysis of the impacts of the decision, including how it affects EWEB customers and the McKenzie Valley community.
- EWEB will continue to clarify the financial, environmental, and social impacts of our decision and report updates as we define them. EWEB rate payers local and community members can access these updates by checking the project website and signing up for our monthly email newsletter about the project.
- In the meantime, EWEB will continue to communicate the project and its potential impacts, holding public hearings with stakeholders in the McKenzie Valley to better understand how our eventual decision may affect our electricity rate payers and the Leaburg community.
- Please keep a look out for project updates and opportunities to provide feedback as we determine the most responsible future for the Leaburg Canal, EWEB customers, the McKenzie Valley community, and EWEB's electricity portfolio.

Outreach Phases & Communications Channels

Currently, broadly disseminated communications (including local newspapers, radio, and TV stations) about the Leaburg Canal focus on EWEB's decision to temporarily dewater the canal due to structural issues. Other than readers of *McKenzie River Reflections* and EWEB Board Meeting attendees, few people in EWEB's service area have heard about the upcoming SWC or RTS decision.

EWEB staff will communicate the SWC/RTS decision in four phases through 2022. This will begin in Q1 with a project website launch, explanatory video, and press release to introduce the decision paradigm narrative. Q2 will focus on in-person meetings to present background information to key stakeholders and gather feedback, as well as to survey customers about how they would prioritize some of the projected social impacts. In Q3, we will begin to report back the findings of the expanded TBL assessment and social impact surveys, and in Q4 we will communicate the Board's decision and next steps. Further details on the specific plan and schedule are included as appendices.

Conclusions

Results from the Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will be reflected in the documented findings of the expanded TBL assessment. The Board will have several opportunities to review draft results, raise questions, and provide comments prior to finalization of the TBL assessment.

Requested Board Action

No Board action is requested at this time, but feedback on the proposed approach is welcomed.

Appendix A: Full Leaburg Canal Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Project Summary		
<p>With approximately 20 years remaining on the FERC-issued operating license for the Leaburg-Waltermville Project, EWEB is evaluating the near- and long-term options to resolve dam safety concerns associated with the Leaburg Canal. The Leaburg Powerhouse has been out of service since October 2018 following observations of increased seepage and internal erosion of the canal embankments that prompted EWEB and the FERC to dewater the canal and cease power generation. The Leaburg Canal has been operating as a Storm Water Conveyance (SWC) facility since then.</p> <p>Areas of low strength soils were encountered during subsurface investigations in April 2019, indicating there are portions of the embankment that could become unstable during an earthquake. In response to this new information on safety risks, EWEB initiated a comprehensive assessment of the entire canal in late 2019 to better understand the level of investment that would be required to ensure long term safe and reliable operation.</p> <p>In 2020-2021, EWEB conducted risk analyses and gathered preliminary data to assess the Financial, Environmental, and Social costs and benefits to guide the utility’s decision between the Return to Service (RTS) or Storm Water Conveyance (SWC) options. In 2022, EWEB will launch a communications campaign and contract with a public relations firm to better assess the Social impacts of its decision. EWEB will empower Commissioners and the Executive Team to make the decision, collaborate with its employees to advise the decision, inform electricity rate payers about the project and any determinations, engage the McKenzie Valley community in efforts to understand and mitigate unforeseen Social impacts of the decision, and involve key stakeholders, including Canal Irrigators and Fish Hatcheries, to mitigate direct impacts of the decision that may affect them. \$</p>		
Goals & Objectives		
<p>Internal: EWEB Employees, Commissioners and Executive Team are adequately informed about TBL process and project updates to be able to make decisions and address constituents’ concerns.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employees know updates before learning about them through external sources 2. Monthly updates to Board and ET <p>External: Through informing and engaging community, we will properly assess, weigh, and rank the Social impacts of the decision and accurately relay that information to the Board. Rate payers feel adequately Informed, McKenzie Valley community feels listened to and understood and properly Engaged, and Key Stakeholders receive appropriate level of Involvement in decision-making process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. 150 people attend meetings/tours upriver 4. 200 Customers on Monthly Email list 5. 5,000 views of videos summarizing Leaburg Project, TBL, and Board decision 6. 300 survey responses from Customers 7. 100 monthly visitors to project website 8. 10 earned media articles/stories 9. 30,000 people Reached via EWEB social media channels \$ 		
Stakeholder Groups & Levels of Engagement		
Stakeholder Group	Level of Engagement	Key Messages, Goals
EWEB Commissioners, EWEB Executive Team	Empower	Equip with information to make decision, provide communications collateral to explain project and

		TBL findings to constituents.
EWEB Employees	Collaborate	Gather ideas, input, and ground-truth proposals, provide communications collateral to explain project and TBL to customers.
Directly Impacted Stakeholders: Canal Irrigators, Fish Hatcheries, Canal Neighbors	Involve	Ensure Directly Impacted Stakeholders understand the effects of each decision to their unique properties, operations, and livelihoods, and involve representatives in planning to mitigate effects and improve outcomes.
EWEB ratepayers in Eugene and the McKenzie Valley	Consult	Educate customers about the history of the Leaburg Canal, the challenges to its structural integrity, and the necessity for determining its future with a TBL assessment. Consult with customers to determine the weight of social impact considerations, including rate, recreation, local economic, and irrigation implications.
Other Community Groups: McKenzie River Guides, Area Farmers, Leaburg Lake & Canal Recreationalists, Neighborhood Organizations	Inform	Connect with local Community Groups to leverage communication networks to educate broader community about the Canal’s current issues, decision pathways and implications, and how the public can stay informed about the project’s progress.

Key Messages

- The Leaburg Canal has helped power the development of the McKenzie Valley and Eugene areas and has served our community with clean and reliable hydropower for nearly 100 years. Due to its age, it has structural deficiencies that must be addressed. **Therefore, we are investigating the financial, environmental, and social costs to decide whether we should:**
 - **Return to Service (RTS)** - restore the Leaburg Canal’s ability to provide hydropower generation in both the near (current license term) and long term (future relicensing), or
 - **Storm Water Conveyance (SWC)** – indefinitely cease power generation and only repair the canal’s ability to function as a tributary of the McKenzie River and carry water from run-off and creeks to the river.
- EWEB will continue to clarify the financial, environmental, and social impacts of our decision and report updates as we define them. You can access these updates by checking the project website and signing up for our monthly email newsletter about the project.
- In the meantime, EWEB will continue to communicate the project and its potential impacts, holding public hearings with stakeholders in the McKenzie Valley to better understand how our eventual decision may affect our electricity rate payers and the Leaburg community.
- Please keep a look out for project updates and opportunities to provide feedback as we determine the most responsible future for the Leaburg Canal, EWEB customers, the McKenzie River community, and EWEB’s electricity portfolio.

Communications Channels and Tactics

EWEB Owned
EWEB Employee News
EWEB Social Media
EWEB Billing Messages

Public Meetings
 Upriver Board Meeting
 Canal Walking Tour
 Grange Meetings
 Key Stakeholder Meetings

Earned/Purchased Media
 Local news, TV & radio stations

Out of Door
 Signage at EWEB Facilities, public gathering places
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Direct Mail

Work plan (Colors correspond with Appendix B: Communications Timeline)

Task	Staff Lead	Timing
PHASE ONE – Create Comms Plan		
Create Comms Strategy & Timeline	Adam	11/16/2021
Send for ET Review	Lisa	11/19/2021
Board Correspondence	Lisa	12/7/2021
PHASE TWO - Begin Informing		
Establish Monthly Employee Newsletter	Lisa/Adam	1/03/2022
Launch Project Website/Brochure	Adam	1/10/2022
Establish Monthly External Newsletter	Adam	1/31/2022
Create video summarizing Leaburg decision/comms launch	Adam	1/31/2022
Edit Leaburg Wikipedia page	Adam	1/21/2022
Create survey for desired feedback	Adam	1/21/2022
Schedule public general information meeting for McKenzie Valley ratepayers	Adam	1/24/2022
Email introduction to Key Stakeholder Groups	Adam	1/25/2022
Promote General Info and Key Stakeholder Meetings	Adam	Feb – March
Press Release – broadly announce Leaburg decision matrix, TBL process	Adam	2/15/2022
PHASE THREE - Gather Feedback		
Attend Walterville Grange Meetings	Adam	March-June
Key Stakeholder Groups Meetings	Mark	March
Create/Post signage for EWEB facilities and	Adam	March-April

upriver public spaces		
Promote Social Impact survey	Adam	Feb. – July
Lead Canal Walking Tours	Adam	April-June
Upriver Board Meeting	Lisa	4/19/2022
Outreach to follow-up upon Upriver Board Meeting	Adam	4/26/2022
PHASE FOUR - Finalize TBL and Report Back		
Key Stakeholders follow-up meeting	Adam	6/30/2022
Begin summarizing survey results, in-person testimony	Adam	July-September
Create video summarizing TBL results	Adam	August
PHASE FIVE - Advise and Report Final Decision		
Advertise decision timeline	Adam	October
Summarize Survey Findings, formal TBL report	Lisa	October-December
Board Decision	Board	October-December
Communicate Board Decision	Adam	October-December
Meet with Key Stakeholders to evaluate impacts	Mark	October-December
PHASE SIX – Project progress communication	Adam	Ongoing, 2022-2028
Identified Risks & Mitigation Efforts		
From Preliminary TBL: SWC Social Impacts to evaluate	From Preliminary TBL: RTS Social Impacts to evaluate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal path is no longer aesthetically pleasing. • Loss of irrigation opportunity for local users who draw their McKenzie River water right from canal. • Lowering of water table impacts viability of neighboring domestic wells. • Change in floodplain, inundation area during storm events to properties in Leaburg reach? • Toxic algal bloom safety impacts on people and pets (ex. dogs playing in canal). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced instream flows compared to natural flow regime, especially in summer, has negative impacts on boating/fishing • Outages and maintenance alter flow regime, impacting angling opportunities and fishing guides • Perpetuates reliance on canal water for private use that may be interrupted for various operational reasons 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embankment failure during storm event could cause loss of life or property. • Loss of accessible water for firefighting. • Lack of irrigation increases fire danger on adjacent properties. • Creates an “attractive nuisance.” • Loss of local jobs and businesses due to inability to irrigate (ex. Holly Farm, Lavender Farm, Organic Redneck Farm, McKenzie Hatchery). • Cost of digging deeper wells. • Water table/groundwater reduction impacts wells and irrigation. • Aesthetically unpleasant “muddy ditch” instead of flowing canal. • Mosquito and insect source that is frustrating to neighbors. • Loss of local energy resilience? • Loss of community pride in local, low carbon energy resource • Impact on Leaburg Historic District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embankment failure could cause loss of life or property. Higher risk and impact than stormwater conveyance option. • Fast flowing, cold water and infrastructure poses a safety risk if people and pets use the canal for recreation • Canal seepage could impact neighboring properties (ex. wet fields, home foundations) • Rate impact from cost of necessary repairs
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Media Roundup

- June 24, 2021, MRR: [Rate increase may be coming](#)
- Feb 11, 2021, MRR: [Leaks and seismic concerns threaten EWEB power canals](#)
- Jan 14, 2020, OR fly-fishing blog: [Leaburg Canal to remain down through 2021](#)
- Aug 23, 2019, RG: [Neighbors, farmers facing Leaburg Canal conundrum](#)
- Feb 19, 2019, KVAL: [Plans being put into motion in order to get Leaburg Canal up and running](#)
- Feb 19, 2019, KVAL: [Hatchery is the legacy of Leaburg](#)
- Oct 6, 2018, RG: [EWEB to draw down Leaburg Canal as erosion concern increases](#)
- <http://www.eweb.org/about-us/news/dam-safety-is-a-top-priority>
- <http://www.eweb.org/about-us/power-supply/mckenzie-river-hydro-projects>

Appendix B: Leaburg Canal Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Timeline

TASK ORDER	TASK TITLE	STAKEHOLDER TARGET/GOAL	CHANNEL	DUE DATE	PHASE ONE - Create Comms Plan														
					October				November				December						
					W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4			
1	Project Conception and Initiation																		
1.1	Define Values	Internal	Internal	10/11/21															
1.1.1	Define Roles	Internal	Internal	10/11/21															
1.1.2	Define Goals	Internal	Internal	10/11/21															
1.2	Define Timeline	Internal	Internal	10/15/21															
1.3	Identify Stakeholders	Internal	Internal	11/1/21															
1.4	Create Comms & Marketing Plan	Internal	Internal	11/1/21															
1.6	Mock-up Project Website	Internal	Internal	12/1/21															
1.5	Send Plan to ET for feedback	Internal	Internal	11/19/21															
1.7	Update MR Hydro Projects Website	Internal	Internal	11/24/21															
1.8	Create Presentation for Board	Internal	Internal	12/3/21															
1.9	PRESENT TO BOARD	Board	Board	12/7/21															

TASK ORDER	TASK TITLE	STAKEHOLDER TARGET/GOAL	CHANNEL	DUE DATE	PHASE TWO - Begin Informing														
					December					January					February				
					W1	W2	W3	W4	F	W1	W2	W3	W4	F	W1	W2	W3	W4	F
2	Establish Connection to Stakeholders																		
2.1	Project Website	All	EWEB.org	1/10/22															
2.2	Monthly Employee Newsletter	ET, EWEB	Employee News, Direct Email	1/3/22															
2.3	Monthly Public-Facing Newsletter,	MV, EEC	Direct Email, SM	1/31/22															
2.4	Video Summary - decision to make	All	SM, PR	2/10/22															
2.5	Edit Leaburg Wikipedia page	All		1/21/22															
2.6	Create survey for feedback	MV, EEC	EWEB.org, SM, Feb. Billing	1/21/22															
2.7	Schedule general	MV	Meeting	1/24/22															
2.8	Email Intro to Key Stakeholder Groups	FH, CI, RG, MRDC, MCDC	Email, EWEB.org	1/21/22															
2.9	Press Release	EEC, MV	EW, RG, KLCC, MRR, TV/Radio	2/15/21															

TASK ORDER	TASK TITLE	STAKEHOLDER TARGET	CHANNEL	DUE DATE	PHASE THREE - Gather Feedback															
					March					April					May					
					W1	W2	W3	W4	F	W1	W2	W3	W4	F	W1	W2	W3	W4	F	
3	Gather Feedback, Assess Inputs																			
3.1	Attend Grange Meeting	MV	Meeting	3/15/22																
3.2	Key Stakeholder Groups meeting	FH, CI, RG, MRDC, MCDC	Meeting	3/7/22																
3.3	Create/Post signage for EWEB facilities	MV, FH, CI, RG, MRDC, MCDC, CR, LL	EWEB OOD, Public spaces	4/15/22																
3.4	Promote survey to get responses	MV, EEC	Direct Email, SM, MRR, meetings	7/15/22																
3.5	Canal Walking Tours	MV	Meetings	6/30/22																
3.7	Upriver Board Meeting (April 19, 2022)	MV	Meeting	4/19/22																

TASK ORDER	TASK TITLE	STAKEHOLDER TARGET	CHANNEL	DUE DATE	PHASE FOUR - Finalize TBL and Report Back															
					June					July					August					
					W1	W2	W3	W4	F	W1	W2	W3	W4	F	W1	W2	W3	W4	F	
4	Finalize TBL and Report Back																			
4.1	Key Stakeholder Groups follow-up meeting	FH, CI, RG, MRDC, MCDC	Meeting	6/30/22																
4.2	Summarize Survey Findings, anecdotes	All	Direct Email, SM	8/24/22																
4.3	Lavender Festival - outreach	MV	Meeting	7/10/22																
4.3.1	Chainsaw Festival - outreach	MV	Meeting	8/24/22																
4.4	National Hydropower Day (Aug 24)	All	Owned	8/24/22																
4.5	Video/EWEB News - Summary of Findings	All	Owned	8/31/22																
4.5	Press Release - Summary of Findings	All	Earned	8/31/22																

TASK ORDER	TASK TITLE	STAKEHOLDER TARGET	CHANNEL	DUE DATE	PHASE FOUR - Advise and Report Final Decision															
					September				October				November				December			
5	Advise and Report Final Decision				W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
5	Walterville Waddle	MV	Meeting	9/10/22																
5.1	Advertise decision timeline	All	Owned, Purchased	11/1/22																
5.2	Summarize Survey Findings - Social consideration	All s in TBL, Financial & Environmental findings	Owned, Purchased	11/1/22																
5.3	Board Decision	All	Owned, Purchased	12/1/22																
5.4	Communicate Board Decision	All	Owned, Purchased	12/1/22																
5.5	Key Stakeholder Groups Impacts meeting	MV, FH, CI, RG, MRDC, MCDC	Meeting	12/1/22																