

Gold Ray Dam

Public Comment Summary

NEPA Scoping Meeting
November 12, 2009

Summary prepared by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG)

One hundred five (105) people signed in at the November 12th meeting.

All comment forms, letters and emails are on file at the Rogue Valley Council of Governments.

Summary of all comments received as of November 25, 2009

- 20 **remove the dam**
- 14 **keep the dam**
- 3 **other/questions/concerns**

Twelve **comment forms** were turned in at the November 12, 2009 meeting.

- 6 remove the dam
- 6 keep the dam

As of November 25, 2009 **additional comment forms** received the Rogue Valley Council of Governments:

- 4 remove the dam
- 4 keep the dam
- 2 other/questions/concerns

As of November 25, 2009 **emails with comments** received by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments:

- 9 remove the dam
- 3 keep the dam
- 1 other/suggestion(s) on process

As of November 25, 2009 **letters** received by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments:

- 1 remove the dam
- 1 keep the dam

Summary of comments/questions provided in person to Gold Ray Project team staff at the November 12, 2009 NEPA Scoping Meeting

Scott Wright, Water Resources Engineer
River Design Group, Inc.

1. Several neighbors along the Tolo Slough were concerned about their existing wells drying up if the dam is removed.
2. Two people commented on the great habitat/spawning areas that will be reclaimed as a result of dam removal.
3. One person was interested in having more recreational access, primarily through a new boat ramp.
4. One person was concerned about the wetland determination and was questioning the plant identification.
5. One person said a new fish ladder would solve all the problems.
6. One person was interested in preserving the historical context of the powerhouse and making it a museum.
7. One person was concerned about the wildlife in the reservoir area.

**No one mentioned the fish counting station or generating power to Scott.

John Vial, Roads and Parks Director
Jackson County

Several comments same as what Scott heard.

1. Two people commented on concerns about domestic water intakes downstream from the dam that could be impacted from sediment and turbidity.

2. One person commented on loss of waterfront property and draw down of water table impacting his orchard, expects county to compensate him for this loss.
3. One person, a fishing guide, commented that he will be impacted by lost business when the dam is being removed due to turbidity causing guided tours to be canceled. Expected that the county reimburse him for that loss.
4. Two property owners concerned about increased river traffic from rafters which will cause litter, trespass, and other conflicts with private property (downstream from dam).
5. One person concerned that county is only looking at the negatives of keeping the dam and not in the potential to generate revenue and develop a park.
6. One person stated that the county lacks vision and that power generation is clearly a viable alternative and that we are not treating this alternative fairly.
7. Several stated that mercury and other heavy metals are present and will migrate downstream which will poison water intakes for domestic water supplies. Several noted that local gold miners told them about the mercury.
8. A Pacific Power Company rep. who oversees the FERC approval process discounted the rehabilitation alternative and said, "Obtaining FERC approval at this site will be nearly impossible." When asked if Pacific Power would like the dam back she kindly declined.

Megan Hilgart

NOAA

I also had comments that overlap ones submitted above.

1. One person proposed that water in the reservoir behind the dam be used to irrigate crops.
2. One person wanted to know what was going to be done about all the gold behind the dam and all the other precious metals.
3. Two people asked if we were going to analyze beneficial recreational impacts of dam removal in the environmental review process.
4. Two people wanted to know how we could say the dam was such a problem for fish when there had been record fish runs recently (they pointed to the graph that was kindly donated to my station).
5. One person asked how removing the dam would impact frogs. This person stated that they were concerned about the frogs because they wanted to harvest them to eat.
6. One person asked how come DSL said they couldn't fill in the ponds on their property because they were wetlands but they hadn't heard DSL weigh in on draining the wetlands behind the dam.

Leandra Cleveland

HDR Inc.

At the Natural Resources station the comments were basically all about recreation in one form or another.

1. One person from the Klamath Bird Observatory wanted to know if we were doing bird surveys because they would like to have that information.
2. Four people concerned about losing access to the Old River Channel because they use it for fishing, educational opportunities, and recreation.

3. Five people concerned about losing the wetlands and upland area behind the dam as it provides fishing, wildlife habitat, and its aesthetic value
4. One person wanted to know if the river channel would eventually meander through the middle of the island
5. Two people from Gold Hills Estates wanted to know if removing the dam would cause an increase in blackberries at their homes downstream
6. Three people wanted to know what would happen to the wetlands behind the dam and what the regulatory requirements were.
7. Three people from SOU offered their names and numbers as contacts for additional natural resource information.

Steve Mason

HDR Inc.

1. Gold Rey Estates owners are concerned that turbidity during construction will be an issue with regards to their irrigation withdrawals. This is something we can work with them on through communication.
2. One Gold Rey Estate lady was concerned about mercury in the pools in front of her place – she says that dredgers have reported that there are “pools” of mercury there. She is concerned that mercury from behind the dam will make the situation worse.
3. One person was concerned that turbidity will cause him to lose fishing days on the river (he is a guide) and thus he will lose income. He feels the County should compensate him for any lost time. He did not indicate whether he would give the county money if the dam removal leads to increased business.
4. One person was interested in the difference in pH that he found in the old channel versus the main channel. Thinks it may be due to the old channel being augmented by another source of water.
5. One person was concerned about the upland island eroding away.
6. One person said the dead fish are all caused by the lack of a fence on the ladder. He said the fish jump out onto the rock (in the picture) and then early in the morning ODFW staff come and kick them into the river.
7. One person told me that I would lie about what I found while doing the EA so that Slayden will still pay me – I have to make sure I report only that which Slayden has already decided they want to hear (anything that leads to dam removal).

Craig Harper, Natural Resources Program Manager

Rogue Valley Council of Governments

Several people spoke to me about power generation:

1. One person suggested that we contact FERC to coordinate with them because of the “pending removal of Klamath dams” and the proposed LNG pipelines.
2. Another person said that technology has improved with hydropower generation, so we should install new generators.

3. Another person said, “If you remove Gold Ray dam and if you do not get generators turning on the site you will have nailed shut the coffin on my belief that this is nothing more than a scam to deprive America of its standard of living. **PUT THE WATER BACK TO WORK!**”
4. Another person said there is “no way that hydropower will **EVER** be generated at the site again.” – too many ESA concerns, not economically feasible, strong political opposition.

No one mentioned the loss of the fish counting station to me either.