



## WHAT IS THE CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY?

The Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary includes the 260-acre Capitol Lake Basin, located on the Washington State Capitol Campus, in Olympia, Washington. With an adjacent trail system and nearby parks that provide passive recreational opportunities, this waterbody is an important resource and valued amenity in the south Puget Sound area.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LAKE?

The Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (Enterprise Services) is responsible for the stewardship, preservation, operation, and maintenance of the resource. Enterprise Services maintains Capitol Lake as part of the Capitol Campus under a long-term lease agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).



## WHAT IS THE CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY PROJECT?

A long-term plan is needed for managing this important resource. Developing a long-term management plan involves three phases:

- **Phase 1:** In 2016, representatives from local and tribal governments, coordinating state agencies, and the community joined Enterprise Services to identify common goals for long-term management of the resource. Phase 1 was completed in 2016, satisfying the directives of a 2015 legislative proviso.
- **Phase 2:** In 2018, Enterprise Services began the process to develop a project-specific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that evaluates potential alternatives and identifies a preferred alternative for long-term management.
- **Phase 3:** Funding, design, permitting, and construction of the selected long-term management alternative.

## WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a decision-making tool guided by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) that provides impartial information to decision makers and the public about probable adverse environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance environmental quality.

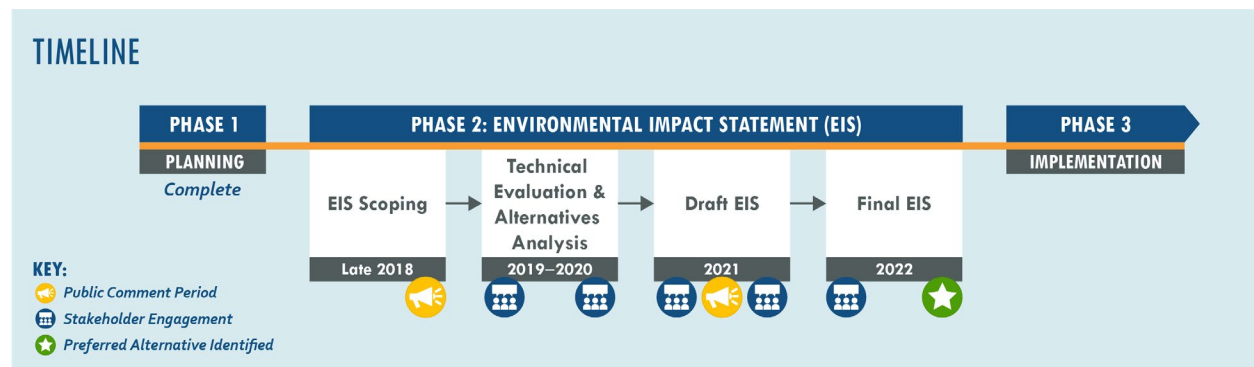
More information about the EIS process is available on the Washington State [Department of Ecology's website](#).

## WHY IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT BEING PREPARED FOR THE CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY?

An EIS is required when the lead agency determines that a proposal or project could result in potentially significant adverse environmental impacts. Enterprise Services, as lead agency under the SEPA, has determined that potential short- and long-term actions could result in adverse environmental impacts, and is therefore preparing an EIS. The Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary EIS will identify a preferred alternative for long-term management.

## WHAT PHASE IS THE CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY PROJECT IN NOW?

The project is now in Phase 2. An EIS is being prepared to evaluate potential alternatives and identify a preferred alternative for long-term management of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary.



## HOW WILL STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PROCESS?

Stakeholders (including members of the public, business groups, tribes, agencies, community organizations, and other governmental entities) are encouraged to participate in the EIS process at two key milestones defined in SEPA: **scoping** and the **Draft EIS**. Scoping is the first step in the EIS process. The purpose of scoping is to determine the range, or “scope,” of issues to study in the EIS. Scoping for this project occurred in fall 2018. The scoping report is available on the project [website](#).

All relevant input received during the scoping and Draft EIS public comment periods is considered in the EIS process. Enterprise Services continues to engage the work groups established in Phase 1 and convened a Community Sounding Board for Phase 2. Please visit the project [website](#) for more details.

## **WHY IS LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF THE CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY IMPORTANT?**

### **Water quality standard violations**

Capitol Lake is currently violating water quality standards because of high levels of phosphorus, which causes algae blooms that deplete dissolved oxygen in Capitol Lake and the adjacent Budd Inlet, using up oxygen essential for fish and other aquatic life.

### **Sediment management issues**

Every year more than 35,000 cubic yards of sediment from the Deschutes River is deposited within the lake basin, resulting in increasingly shallow conditions. Today, the lake is about 21 percent smaller and it holds roughly 60 percent less water than it did in 1951.

### **Presence of invasive species**

Fish and wildlife habitat are impacted due to the presence of several invasive and nuisance species including the New Zealand mudsnail, purple loosestrife, Eurasian watermilfoil, nutria, and Canada geese. These species out-compete and negatively impact native populations.

### **Restricted active community use**

Over the years, high bacterial levels and the presence of invasive species have resulted in impacts to the recreational use of Capitol Lake. The presence of New Zealand mudsnails resulted in official closure to all active uses in 2009. Active use of the waterbody continues to be restricted today.

## **WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES FOR LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF THE CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY?**

In 2016, Enterprise Services, in collaboration with stakeholders, identified the following objectives for long-term management of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary:

- Improve water quality
- Manage sediment accumulation and future deposition
- Enhance ecological functions
- Restore active community use

Enterprise Services will use the EIS process to evaluate and identify a preferred environmentally and economically sustainable long-term management alternative that satisfies these objectives.

## WHAT ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN PRELIMINARILY IDENTIFIED FOR LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT?

At a minimum, four primary long-term management alternatives will be evaluated in the EIS:

- **Estuary** – restores full tidal hydrology throughout the basin
- **Hybrid** – establishes a tidal estuary in most of the basin but retains a reflecting pool
- **Managed Lake** – similar to existing conditions, with additional strategies to manage sediment and water quality
- **No Action** – represents the most likely future if the project is not implemented (required part of the evaluation by state law)

Each alternative would include strategies and actions to satisfy the long-term management objectives.

Several sub-options or variations of these primary alternatives have also been proposed. A screening process has been developed to identify the range of alternatives that move forward for detailed technical review in the EIS.

## WHO LEADS THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PROCESS AND WHO PREPARES THE DOCUMENT?

Enterprise Services will serve as the lead agency for the EIS. Enterprise Services is responsible for stewardship, preservation, operation, and maintenance of the Capitol Lake – Deschutes Estuary and has the primary responsibility of complying with SEPA requirements in this process.

Enterprise Services selected a neutral third party to help prepare an EIS in accordance with SEPA. The role of this team is to provide an impartial analysis of the potential environmental impacts and a range of alternatives. They will document the analysis in a readable EIS that explains technical content and allows the public to understand the most significant and vital information concerning the project.

The interdisciplinary team has specialty experience and expertise in EIS development and SEPA regulations, combined with specific technical expertise in the environmental disciplines that will be studied in the EIS.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT?

An EIS of this size and complexity will likely require about 3 years to complete (see graphic above).

## WILL THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IDENTIFY A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT?

Yes, the Final EIS will identify a preferred alternative.

## **WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT PROPOSED TO BE EVALUATED IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT?**

The scoping process helped identify what should be evaluated in the EIS. Under SEPA, an EIS needs to focus on probable significant adverse impacts. Disciplines identified during scoping, for further analyses in the EIS, include the following:

- Air Quality and Odor
- Economics
- Environmental Health
- Fish and Wildlife
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Invasive Species
- Land Use, Shoreline, and Recreation
- Public Services and Utilities
- Sea Level Rise and Climate Change
- Sediment Transport and Geomorphology
- Transportation
- Visual Quality
- Water Resources
- Wetlands and Vegetation

## **WHAT IS THE FUNDING SOURCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE IN PHASE 3?**

During Phase 1, a Funding and Governance Work Group was assembled to gauge the degree of general support for shared funding by state, local, and federal governments and potentially other entities, in accordance with a legislative proviso. The Funding and Governance Work Group identified goals or attributes of a potential shared funding and governance model for long-term management. Enterprise Services will continue to work with the Funding and Governance Work Group during Phase 2 to identify or define the funding sources for Phase 3.