

**DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**  
**BARBER POOL SECTION 1135 ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION**  
**DRAFT INTEGRATED FEASIBILITY REPORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**Ada County, Idaho**

**February 2026**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District (USACE) has conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. The draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (FR/EA) dated February 2026, for the *Barber Pool Section 1135 Ecosystem Restoration Study*, addresses the feasibility of restoring aquatic structure, function, and processes within the Barber Pool Conservation Area (BPCA), located within Ada County, Idaho.

Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended, authorizes a non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) to partner with USACE to cost-share the planning, design, and construction of projects to restore habitat degraded by the construction or operation of a Federal project. Under this authority, the NFS provides all necessary lands, easements, rights-of-way, relocations, and disposals and conducts long-term operations and maintenance. Boise State University is the NFS for this study. The BPCA is located along the Boise River, approximately 3 miles southeast of downtown Boise, Idaho.

This draft FR/EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives to restore degraded aquatic ecosystems within the study area. Section 3 of the draft FR/EA describes the alternative formulation process, and Section 5 describes the alternative comparison and selection process.

The Recommended Plan is Alternative 4, which consists of restoring approximately 18 acres of wetland and riparian habitat, and 4,000 linear feet of channel within Main Channel 1, 2, and 3 of the study area.

Under the approval of Alternative 4, USACE would enter into a Project Partnership Agreement with Boise State University for the Design and Implementation Phase of the project.

All practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the Recommended Plan. The following resources were considered but not included in the effects analysis because USACE did not identify any potential effects: noise pollution, air quality, or hazardous/toxic materials. The potential effects are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan**

Environmental Resources Analyzed	Insignificant effects	Insignificant effects as a result of mitigation	Resource unaffected by action
Geology	X	-	-
Hydrology, Hydraulics, and Fluvial Geomorphology	X	-	-
Water Quality	X	-	-
Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	X	-	-
Vegetation	X	-	-
Wetlands and Aquatic Ecosystems	X	-	-
Wildlife/Terrestrial Resources	X	-	-
Threatened and Endangered Species	X	-	-
Cultural and Historic Resources	X	-	X
Recreation	X	-	-
Aesthetics/Visual Resources	X	-	-
Socioeconomics	-	-	X

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), USACE determined that the Recommended Plan would have a “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” determination due to the potential presence of Yellow-Billed Cuckoo. A draft biological assessment (BA) for ESA compliance will be finalized to document potential effects on listed species resulting from the Federal action. USACE will submit a final BA to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and expects receive a Letter of Concurrence.

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) prohibits the take or disturbance of bald and golden eagles. An active bald eagle nest is located adjacent to portions of the Recommended Plan. USACE is incorporating the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines to establish appropriate protective buffers and to schedule work outside of the critical nesting season. USACE is also consulting with the USFWS Migratory Bird Permit Office to discuss the potential disturbance the Recommended Plan may have on bald eagles, and the need for a permit to formalize protective measures to be implemented during construction.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, USACE determined that implementation of the Recommended Plan has no potential to cause effects on historic properties. A record search conducted by both the USACE and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) databases identified one historic site within the project area that has been determined not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Additionally, a cultural survey of the project area conducted in 2025 did not identify any previously unknown cultural sites. USACE conducted special scoping and site visits to the BPCA with Native American groups who have a connection to the landscape. This was to determine if there were traditional cultural properties within the BPCA, or other concerns related to the proposed project. During this on-going coordination, there have been no traditional cultural properties identified within the study area. USACE has begun Section 106 consultation for the

Recommended Plan with the Idaho SHPO and is currently consulting with the Shoshone Bannock Tribes, Shoshone Paiute Tribes, and Burns Paiute Tribe.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The Recommended Plan involves the restoration of approximately 18 acres of wetlands and riparian habitat, and 4,000 linear feet of channel that will likely occur within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Boise River and its perennially connected side channels. Specific fill volumes and precise discharge locations would be finalized upon further development of the Recommended Plan during the Design and Implementation Phase of the project. USACE will ensure full compliance with Section 404, including the completion of a Section 404(b)(1) evaluation, as the design reaches maturity. All required authorizations for work in jurisdictional waters will be obtained prior to the commencement of construction activities.

The proposed restoration actions, including excavation, backfilling, bank stabilization, and wetland creation qualify as aquatic habitat restoration, establishment, and restoration activities. These activities are authorized under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 27, provided they result in a net increase in aquatic resource functions and values. NWP 27 covers projects that improve degraded aquatic ecosystems through reconnection of floodplains, establishment of wetlands, and use of bioengineered structures, all of which apply to the Recommended Plan.

Section 402 of the CWA, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), governs the discharge of pollutants into WOTUS. The proposed restoration activities do not involve the point-source discharge of pollutants. Section 402 also regulates stormwater runoff from construction-related ground disturbances. For actions involving soil disturbance of 1-acre or more, a Construction General Permit and a corresponding Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan are required. Given the early phase of the project, the total footprint of upland and bankline excavation is still being calculated. Should the final design exceed the 1-acre threshold of disturbance, USACE or its contractor will obtain the necessary NPDES coverage and implement all required Best Management Practices to protect water quality during construction.

This draft FONSI and FR/EA are being distributed to relevant Federal, state, and local agencies, the Tribes, and the public for a 30-day review and comment period beginning on or around February 27, 2026, and concluding 30 days from posting.

All applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and local government plans were taken into account in the evaluation of alternatives. It is my determination that implementation of the Recommended Plan does not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

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LTC Kathryn A. Werback  
District Commander

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Date

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