



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Initial Study / Notice of Preparation
El Dorado Forebay Dam Modification Project
Environmental Impact Report

What is El Dorado Forebay Dam and Reservoir?

The El Dorado Forebay Dam and Reservoir was constructed in 1923 as a key part of the El Dorado Hydroelectric Project which stores water diverted from the South Fork of the American River and four upper watershed reservoirs for drinking water and renewable hydroelectric power generation. These four reservoirs include: Caples and Silver Lakes located along Highway 88 and, Echo Lake and Lake Aloha along Highway 50.

Why is the work required?

The remediation work is to improve public safety by safeguarding life and property located below the El Dorado Forebay Dam (Dam). The California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) require specific actions to improve the Dam's overall stability and strength to withstand an earthquake. The Project will also improve emergency water supply availability and hydroelectric power generation flexibility.

What work will be done to Forebay Dam?

In summary, the Project will include:

- Installation of an earth-fill buttress against the dry-side of the Dam
- Adding rock to the water-side of the Dam to reduce water wave erosion
- Repairing the unstable canal section that supplies the reservoir
- Raising the Dam crest 10 feet to provide more freeboard, emergency water supply, and renewable hydroelectric power generation flexibility
- Repairing slope erosion below the emergency spillway
- Relocating and/or replacing various facilities which are associated with the Dam

When will construction begin and how long will it last?

Based on the anticipated completion of the environmental review processes and securing permits, we anticipate starting the Project in spring / summer 2015 and completing in fall / winter 2016. The construction duration is anticipated to take 18 months.

What government agencies regulate dam safety?

DSOD oversees the safety of all non-federal dams in California above a certain height and storage volume, which includes the Forebay Dam. The Dam is also part of EID's El Dorado Hydroelectric Project FERC No. 184, which is also overseen by FERC.

Why is the Project starting now?

DSOD required EID to review the stability of the Dam in 2003. A series of technical investigations and studies of the Dam's stability required extensive time to complete. Analyses from the studies completed over the past decade indicate that stability improvements are required. EID has since worked with DSOD and FERC to determine the engineering design and extent of the modifications needed to achieve these stability requirements. EID is working to secure all needed permits and approvals for the Project.

Why is the Forebay reservoir level lower than it was in the past?

As a result of DSOD's and FERC's findings, in 2009 they imposed a safety restriction of lowering the water level in Forebay by three feet. This safety restriction will remain in effect until the construction is complete.

What will the reservoir level be during the construction?

The reservoir level is expected to be near normal levels throughout the construction period except for a two to three month period, during the fall of the first construction season, when the reservoir must be completely drawn-down to install required valves on the reservoir side of the drinking water conduit and the hydropower conduit.

What will the reservoir level be after construction?

The water level restriction presently imposed by DSOD and FERC will be lifted after the Dam stabilization is complete and it will be certified to safely store an additional 10 feet of water.

The Forebay is a man-made off-stream reservoir that serves water supply needs for EID customers and produces renewable hydroelectric power. Water levels within the Forebay will fluctuate according to these water and power needs.

What recreational activities will be allowed after construction?

The same opportunities that exist today will continue to be available after construction. The Project does not include any changes to the current recreation facilities or recreation management at Forebay. After construction activities are completed, visitors to Forebay will be able to resume passive recreation such as fishing and picnicking opportunities provided at the reservoir. The Project will not change the current restriction on swimming or boating recreation activities at the reservoir, which are regulated by the California Department of Public Health because the reservoir supplies public drinking water.

What parts of the reservoir will be closed off during the construction?

Due to the level of construction activities and conditions that will make for unsafe conditions to the public, the site will be closed for the duration of the construction period.

EID offers a variety of other recreational opportunities for the public which will not be affected by this Project. The nearest, and largest, is Sly Park Recreation Area (Jenkinson Lake), located approximately 5 miles south of the Project.

Where is the repair material coming from?

The majority of the earth fill will be obtained from EID's property adjacent to the Dam. It is anticipated that the gravel and large rocks will be imported from commercial quarries. All other construction materials will be imported.

Will local roads be closed during construction?

In order to safely and efficiently transport material and equipment to and from the construction site, a traffic control plan will be employed which meets the El Dorado County Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements. EID will work with the construction contractor to minimize temporary traffic control impacts.

Personnel, equipment, and imported materials will reach the site via Highway 50, Sly Park Road, Pony Express Road, and Forebay or Blair Road, which are paved, all-weather roads suitable for the anticipated loads. To access the southwestern portion of the reservoir and the Dam's left abutment, vehicles will utilize Pony Express Road, Polaris Road, and Drop-off Road. The transportation of the earth fill material will occur over a short section of Forebay Road at the Forebay Road Bridge over EID's hydroelectric system penstock, which carries water from Forebay to the El Dorado Powerhouse located at the bottom of the South Fork American River canyon.

How many people will the Project employ?

The number of employees directly working on the Project will vary during different construction phases with an average of 20 to 40 workers. There will likely be increased demand for services and goods from local vendors during the construction activities.

Will my EID bills increase to fund the Project?

No new rate increases will be associated with the Project. The Project's estimated costs are already included in the five-year capital improvement program (CIP) budget.

What is included in e-mail notifications?

Details such as the Project's schedule, construction, public meetings, and other pertinent information throughout the duration of the Project will be provided in the e-mail notifications. You may sign up for automatic updates by going to "eNews Sign Up" on EID's website. Or, you may access this information at any time by going directly to the front page of EID's website at www.eid.org and clicking on the Forebay Project link.