



MEETING NOTES

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

MEETING NAME: Historic Mitigation Workshop for College Hill Reservoir

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, September 12 from 6-7:30 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Members of the public; Historical Research Associates (HRA) staff: Natalie Perrin; EWEB staff: Wallace McCollough, Karen Kelley, Kris Stenshoel, Mike Masters, Jennifer Connors, Claire Wray

NOTES:

Historic Mitigation Presentation

Natalie Perrin led a presentation on historic mitigation. She provided a brief overview of 1) The purpose of Historic Mitigation; 2) Background on the College Hill System; 3) The Significance of the resources on College Hill; 4) The process for developing a mitigation approach; and 5) How participants could share their voices.

The presentation was interactive and audience members asked many questions and shared preferences in the open forum. Suggestions related to historic mitigation have been extracted and summarized below.

Mitigation-Related Suggestions from the Audience

- A participant said the facilities should not only be memorialized for their clinical historic value (their purpose in expanding Eugene's water system and their depression-era construction). Other character-defining features should also be acknowledged. Things like views at the site and how the site has been used for recreation.
- A commenter asked if there was any thought to preserving some of the integrity of the WPA architecture (e.g., a remanent wall) before demolition. They said that for people who walk around it the shade of that huge wall and moisture of the moss are special elements that are going to be lost.
- Someone said EWEB should try to link the mitigation to the function that the space serves for the community now. For example, there are great views at the site. So perhaps in the design of shared spaces, there could be a high point with a reference or a panel or something that describes "this is what it was like when the reservoir was here." So, tying the functions that are there that people so much appreciate and are going to miss – but hopefully won't miss because they will be there in the design of the new shared spaces on site and incorporate important historical details.

- A participant asked if reservoir 607 was ever used as a fallout shelter and if so, if that will be included in the mitigation. (Natalie said it was approved for use as a fallout shelter, but to her knowledge it was never used). The commentor said they hoped the fallout shelter history could be incorporated into the mitigation somehow.
- A commentor asked if there will be separate mitigation plans for the different structures that make up the water system (e.g., reservoir 603, reservoir 607, the pump house, and the elevated steel tank). Natalie said the mitigation will cover all four resources.
- Someone pointed out that when we think about the budget for this project that this site is currently available for usage by all customers and people come from all over Eugene to use it. So that should be considered in the budget.
- Someone wondered if the College Hill resources are in the national registry or if they are just deemed eligible. Natalie said they are just deemed eligible but not actually listed in the registry. The person then asked if it could be listed. Natalie said because we know it needs to be removed, it would not be listed, but we can preserve the same level of honorific with a record in something like The Historic American Engineering Record. This type of record could capture all the system's detailed and rich history – e.g., the fallout shelter, the WPA funding, the historic design developed by a local engineer, etc.
- A commentor noted that interpretive panels could be a target for graffiti.
- Someone asked for relevant examples that have been done well by other agencies in the PNW. EWEB offered to follow up with examples via email.
- Someone mentioned good examples of remnant wall historic mitigation being the Ecotrust Building in Portland. They also mentioned Gasworks Park in Seattle which is a good example of a recreational site that preserved historic structures.
- A commentor asked to read the Intensive Level Survey put together for the College Hill Reservoir System. EWEB offered to send a link to everyone via email. Natalie said that SHPO had comments on the document that influenced the final statement of significance. We offered to send links to all relevant documents (the survey, the comments from SHPO, and the resulting final statement of significance) so that folks could see how information evolved over time.
- Someone asked if there any mitigation ideas that are already off the table? Specifically, can the mitigation include recreation space on top of the new water storage tanks so that it provides the same function as it does now? Natalie confirmed that the top of the new tanks will not be accessible to the public, so that idea is off the table.
- A commentor said “on the roof” is different than “above the roof” – and suggested a platform could be built above the tanks for public use.
- Someone asked how the stakeholder(agency/tribe)-level input process relates to the and parallel public-level input process. Natalie said they happen separately but input from each group is equally weighted in the development of the mitigation approach. The person asked if they will be provided notes from the stakeholder meeting. EWEB committed to sending notes in a separate follow-up email. The person wanted to ensure there would be a meshing of ideas.
- Someone asked how historic mitigation will tie into the landscaping plan. Natalie and EWEB confirmed that historic mitigation will inform the landscaping plan. The team also noted it is important to get started on historic mitigation early so we can have time to work with

everyone (stakeholders and public) on the solution. We also want to identify early any elements of the existing structure or signage that needs to be preserved so we can plan for that prior to demolition.

- A commentor said the last 15 years or so have been significant historically with the neighborhood coming together to put a whole bunch of effort and time in keeping the reservoir open. This person built the path to the reservoir so that it was ADA accessible; they also mentioned there has been an active reservoir watch group to check the reservoir every day to make sure there wasn't any dog waste on the roof, etc. To this person, those things are much more meaningful/historic than what happened in 1940. Natalie confirmed that these items could potentially be included.
- A commentor said what they heard as the most concrete suggestion for historic mitigation was retaining a remnant wall from the current structure. This person said this idea seemed dependent on siting and asked if the public would be able to comment on the siting plan. EWEB said the siting must be determined by qualified engineering and water quality specialists and there would not be an opportunity for public comment on that element of the project.
- Someone asked if EWEB would participate in meetings called by neighborhood groups to provide more information, if needed. EWEB confirmed we would be happy to participate.
- A commentor suggested we post meeting information on NextDoor. EWEB confirmed we recently started using the platform and will post meeting information there in the future.
- Someone suggested we post signs with project information at the reservoir. EWEB confirmed that effort is underway.
- For a final comment, someone said they loved the sound of the gates when it slams shut and suggested we retain the gates as a part of the mitigation. Another participant said the sound was a bit bothersome because of their house's proximity to the reservoir.

The meeting was adjourned.