



# MEETING NOTES

## EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

MEETING NAME: Historic Mitigation of EWEB's College Hill Reservoir

DATE/TIME: Thursday, May 16, 2024 from 10:00 – 11:00 am

ATTENDEES: Historical Research Associates (HRA) staff: Natalie Perrin; Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer: Ian Johnson; EWEB Staff: Jennifer Connors

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### NOTES:

#### Outreach Completed

An EWEB staff member provided a brief overview of the Historic Mitigation communications and outreach done to date. Outreach has included:

- September 12 and October 24, 2023: Historic Mitigation Agency Meetings
- January 22, 2024: General Q&A Session
- January 25, 2024: General Q&A Session
- March 21, 2024: Historic Mitigation Public Mtg. #2
- Two Historic Mitigation questionnaires: EWEB took a funnel approach to their surveys, where the first one asked for general input and ideas. The second one asked for a response to particular ideas that were shared.

All feedback and meeting notes published on the EWEB's College Hill Reservoir Replacement Project webpage, including concerns and constraints for each of the Historical Mitigation options and survey results.

#### Review of Historical Mitigation Options

A Historical Research Associates (HRA) staff member reminded the group that this is not a federal process, but the steps are very similar. EWEB will be using the standard Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from the SHPO website.

An HRA staff member reviewed the four proposed options that were developed based on the feedback from stakeholders and the public. These included the following:

1. **Repurposing Reservoir Railing** – This option integrates railing post into the redesign of the landscaping. There are roughly 100 of the railing posts, some of which are in disrepair. The public expressed an interest in preserving a portion of the wall, so we asked Petersen Structural Engineers to analyze the feasibility. Unfortunately preserving or relocating a portion of the walls is not feasible from a budget and risk perspective due to the age and condition of the existing concrete. Salvaging the unique railing posts is the best feasible option.
2. **Mural Depiction** – Working with local artists or community organizations, this option creates a mural that depicts the historical elements of the reservoir system. EWEB would fund the piece, ensure that the mural is publicly accessible, and is geographically proximate. Signage could be placed nearby to provide information and background about the reservoir’s history and significance. To avoid becoming an attractive nuisance, we advise locating the mural elsewhere in the city.
3. **Interpretive Display** – Combining signage and artifacts, this option creates an experiential, self-guided display about the College Hill Reservoir within the boundaries of the site. It would be visible and accessible by the public with access pathways conforming to ADA guidelines. The display would include photographs and text describing the evolution and expansion of water use over time in the area, College Hill Reservoir’s role in that development, and the impact of the system on public health. We would explore the idea of how the indigenous use of water and integrate design elements relevant to the resource.
4. **Digitization of College Hill Reservoir System Records** – This option preserves records related to the College Hill Reservoir System and ensures they are widely available to the public. Appropriate repositories could include Northwest Digital Heritage, the Oregon Historical Society, the University of Oregon Special Collections, and/or the Lane County Historical Society.

These options were developed from the public surveys and stakeholder meetings. Organizations invited to the previous stakeholder meetings included Tribes, Restore Oregon, University of Oregon Historical Preservation Program, University of Oregon Museum of Cultural and Natural History, City of Eugene Landmarks Program, and Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

### **Additional Ideas and Feedback**

The Associate Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer suggested looking into the historical mitigation of the Gold Ray Dam, where they displayed interesting pieces of decommissioned machinery with images and contextual information. As mentioned in the first option above, EWEB discussed retaining some of the concrete or railing, but there isn’t any interesting machinery at College Hill the way there was at Gold Ray.

The Preservation Officer saw an opportunity to combine multiple options together, such as: including the railings into the interpretive display or making sure the mural is mentioned on one of the displays and where people can see it. A new idea elaborated on the interpretive display option, which would include a map of what things used to look like compared to what people are looking at in person. For example: “You would be standing under 10 feet of water here,” etc. The Preservation Officer suggested including general themes and signage square footage in the MOA, instead of getting too granular. This would ensure that the agreement is not too narrow for future creativity.

For digitization advice, the Preservation Officer recommended reaching out to organizations ahead of time to find out what they expect and how they prefer things digitized because not all organizations have the same standards. The Preservation Officer suggested using both the Oregon Historical Society and a local organization, to ensure quality care of the digital records and easier local access.

### **Next Steps**

Attendees then reviewed the next steps in the process. The Preservation Officer recommended sending the stakeholders the presentation and notes to review what was discussed in this meeting, as well as giving the stakeholders the option to request a copy of the drafted MOA. The EWEB staff member agreed that stakeholders would be notified shortly.

The timeline of construction at College Hill Reservoir in relation to the Historical Mitigation process was also discussed by attendees. The HRA staff member suggested it would be good to have the MOA signed before demolition begins in early June. With that in mind, the HRA staff member confirmed they would be sending the MOA to the Preservation Officer shortly to begin the signature process or initiate revisions.

The meeting was adjourned.