



Eugene Water & Electric Board

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August 23, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) to invite your organization to participate in conversations about mitigating the removal of the historically significant College Hill Reservoir, located in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon.

EWEB will be holding a kick-off meeting with interested stakeholders via Zoom on **Tuesday, September 12, 2023, from 2-3 p.m.**

Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87681376740?pwd=RVQ3Yi9ENIRYckZSRjRlY1JzNENWUT09>

Meeting ID: 876 8137 6740; **Passcode:** 650819

If you are interested in participating in mitigation conversations, please respond in the affirmative via one of the contact methods (phone/email) below. Likewise, if you or your organization would not like to participate, please let me know and I will remove you from future correspondence pertaining to this project.

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Additional information and background

EWEB operates a parcel of land bounded by Lawrence St. and Lincoln St., between W 23rd and W 25th Aves., in Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. The parcel currently has two reservoirs, College Hill 603 (completed in 1916) and College Hill 607 (1940), which provide drinking water storage for the city of Eugene. Additional resources associated with the reservoirs include a pump house (1927) and an elevated steel tank (1940), both of which are located on separate parcels.

College Hill 607—which serves all Eugene homes and businesses, and provides emergency water for critical community needs, including fire suppression—fails to meet current seismic standards. It is unlikely to survive a major earthquake, resulting in Eugene losing critical supplies of safe drinking water in the event of a disaster.

In addition, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is requiring EWEB to rehabilitate or decommission the reservoir by the end of this year because of leaking roof joints, which creates the potential to degrade the water quality.

EWEB will demolish the 607 reservoir and replace it in the next few years with new, modern drinking water storage tanks built to withstand major earthquakes. The associated pump house, elevated steel tank, and 603 reservoir will also be demolished.

In 2002, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) determined College Hill Reservoir eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In 2020, EWEB, in consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), clarified FEMA's determination of eligibility (DOE) to provide a historic context, statement of significance, integrity assessment, areas and periods of significance, and boundary justification. Clarifying the resource's eligibility is intended to enable

stakeholders and other interested parties an understanding of the history and significance of the resource.

Briefly, the College Hill Reservoir system is locally significant under Criterion A, in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Politics/Government. The period of significance is 1916–1940, the date of initial construction of Reservoir 603 through the completion of Reservoir 607. The resource is eligible as a *structure* inclusive of its four functionally associated components: College Hill reservoir 603 (completed in 1916), the pump house (1927), College Hill reservoir 607 (1940), and the elevated steel tank (1940). The associated resources reflect the expansion and evolution of the City’s water infrastructure during the first half of the twentieth century, including the varied approaches to providing fresh water and increased capacity in a growing municipality; conversion of open-air reservoirs to covered reservoirs; and the role of the federal government in supporting local infrastructure improvement projects during the Depression era. The College Hill Reservoir system’s significance contributes to the larger City water infrastructure system, which is a currently undefined (though presumed eligible/historic) district.

EWEB’s requirements to remove extant features of the College Hill Reservoir system will result in the demolition of an eligible historic property. EWEB acknowledges the impact to the resource under Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 358.653, and via this letter would like to initiate consultation about appropriate mitigation measures to resolve the negative impact of demolition.

In addition to our area Tribes and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), EWEB has identified a variety of civic and community organizations that we believe may be interested in participating in this consultation (see list of copied parties below). If you have suggestions for additional stakeholders, please let us know. Additionally, if the location of the College Hill Reservoir system has additional aspects of significance to you or your community, and you are willing to share that significance as part of this consultation, we would appreciate your knowledge.

As noted, this letter initiates consultation with your organization in accordance with ORS 358.653, to assess appropriate mitigation for the unavoidable negative impact of demolition of the historic resource(s). (There is no federal nexus for this project.) EWEB will next engage in a series of conversations with interested parties and members of the community regarding the aspects of significance of the resource and the best approach to mitigation. Following those conversations, EWEB will formalize the intended mitigation approach in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with SHPO and other signatories, as appropriate.

If you are interested in participating in the mitigation conversations, please respond in the affirmative via one of the contact methods (phone/email) below. Likewise, if you or your organization would not like to participate, please let me know and I will remove you from future correspondence pertaining to this project.

The replacement project is scheduled to begin in 2024, which should provide ample time for consultation. Thank you in advance for your assistance, and we look forward to a meaningful discussion regarding the significance and appropriate mitigation of the College Hill Reservoir system.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Connors
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Copied Parties

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Restore Oregon
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City of Eugene
Planning Division, Historic Review Board
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Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw Indians
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Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
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Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
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Lane County Historical Society/History Museum
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