

ENVIRONMENTAL - TREES & FISH

Water Resources

These pages are to assist you in navigating the chapters that deal with water resources and the impact on tree canopy and wildlife. You can view the complete text at energizeeastsideeis.org. *Suggestion: go to Individual Phase 2 Draft EIS Files and click on the Chapter and specific Section you are interested in.*

There are several “long-term impacts” discussed in **Chapter 3.3.3** - Water Resources. These include:

- 1) Storm water runoff
- 2) Impact on ground water, especially in Redmond and Renton which rely on aquifers for their drinking water.
- 3) Soil Compaction from construction
- 4) Contamination of surface and/or groundwater

PSE claims they can mitigate these impacts through code compliance and other mitigation and that the impact is “less-than-significant.” I suspect they are right in this assumption. It is an existing corridor and much of the intrusion is, in reality, short-lived and related to construction. They should be able to successfully argue that other types of construction projects mitigate these short-term impacts through code compliance.

I think the stronger argument may be the plants and animals impacted by water changes. The most direct being **FISH**.

The new lines would involve 15 (Willows 1) to 17 (Willows 2) **stream crossings**.(Chapter : 3.3-21). This will result in the **removal “of more than 5,400 trees.”** (Chapter: 3.4-16). They say that 17-26% of trees will be removed per acre of area surveyed. However, they also state that they plan **retention of at least 5,000 inventoried trees**. (Chapter: 3.4-14). ***Another way of looking at the math is that if “inventoried” trees include those to be removed and those to be retained, than 5,400 out of 10,400 inventoried trees will be removed.*** That’s **52%** of the inventoried trees that will be removed. The DEIS chose to go with 17-26% of trees/acre which implies much less impact.

Of the 5,400 trees, 1,470(27%) are stated to be in critical and stream buffer areas (Chapter : 3.4-16). However, if looking at the individual inventory for the different segments of the route, that number of trees in critical and stream buffer areas is 3,135 (Chapter : 3.4- 19-24).

This loss of tree canopy and the accompanying loss of **327 acres of vegetation** results in reduced shading over streams and changes water temperatures as well as robbing fish of the shade cover they use to avoid predators. This becomes important when looking at the stream designations. I didn’t research all but I have data looking at the Coal Creek Basin as an example .

The preferred route for Energize Eastside retraces the existing path through this basin, even though these **streams** are now designated as a: "Core Summer Salmonid Habitat" for aquatic life use and "Extraordinary Contact" for recreational use according to the King County stream report updated in November 2016. The lower portion of Coal Creek has been assigned an additional "Supplemental Spawning and Incubation Protection". Any project is subject to the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

The City of Bellevue describes this area as the *Coal Creek Natural Area* with "second growth forests, without a house in sight - echoing the wildness that once covered this area". The City further describes the creek as supporting habitat for Chinook, Rainbow and cutthroat trout, Coho, Sockeye and Steelhead. The creek provides "valuable fish and wildlife habitat, with dense forest protecting water quality and erosion"

I therefore strongly disagree with the assessments stated throughout Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 3.4 of the "less-than-significant" impact. Instead, the loss of trees and other vegetation would have a **significant** impact upon the streams and fish habitat.