



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

**DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)**

**Name of Proposal:** DNS 21-019: SWAKANE RESTORATION THIN

**Description of Proposal:**

The Swakane Restoration Thin project is intended to improve ecological integrity ratings, habitat for multiple wildlife species, and forest health on the Chelan Wildlife Area.

Approximately 735 acres of overstocked forest stands on 4 units will be commercially thinned to more closely reflect the historic range of variability found in fire dependent forests before 1880. This will include a reduction in stocking levels to approximately 25 trees per acre on drier sites to 35 trees per acre in areas with more available moisture (north slopes, protected draws, etc.). All of the commercial thinning units will be leave tree marked with orange paint using the following prescription:

In all units, the thinning prescription will use a combination of Individual, Clumps and Openings (ICO) techniques and stocking/spacing strategies. The following criteria will be used during the leave tree selection process:

- Species preference, in declining order: western larch, ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and grand fir.
- Leave “unique” species that are limited to microsites in the stand.
- All hardwoods species will be automatic leave trees and will not be marked with paint.
- Leave trees with good growing characteristics (good crown ratios and relatively free of pathogens and/or insect damage).
- Leave defective trees with unique characteristics (trees with cat faces, “wolfy” crowns, large limbs, etc.) for Wildlife Reserve Tree (WRT) recruitment.
- In general, attempt to leave a residual stand with a post-treatment stocking level of between 25 (average 42’ spacing) and 35 (average 35’ spacing) trees/acre. Realize that these stocking/spacing guidelines are only intended as a spatial reference starting point. Residual tree density will adapt to account for changes in timber types and microsite conditions.
- In dry ponderosa pine timber types (ridgetops and south facing slopes), the residual tree target shall be between 21 and 30 trees/acre.
- In dry mixed conifer timber types (north facing slopes and protected draws), the residual tree target shall be between 30 and 35 trees/acre.
- For type NP and F riparian areas, add another 10’ to the maximum no cut RMZ and feather the thinning beyond that (primarily thinning from below) for 20’ beyond into the general upland thinning prescription.
- For type NS riparian areas (30’ ELZ’s), increase the leave tree density to approximately 40 TPA.

- Scatter tree clumps (2 to 10 trees per clump) across the unit (e.g. desirable tree species, legacy trees, unique trees, etc.) where appropriate.
- Create small openings (0.5 to 1.5 acre) across the unit where appropriate. Take advantage of pre-existing openings with good production of browse species where appropriate.
- Minimum diameter for leave trees is 6" dbh.
- In general, leave trees >28" dbh unless they pose a safety threat (e. g. tree is at risk of falling over a main line road) or they are a non-preferred species with preferred species surrounding (e.g. grand fir surrounded by ponderosa pine, western larch or Douglas-fir).
- Existing snags will not be marked as leave trees with orange paint. All snags that do not pose a safety threat, as per L & I guidelines, are required to be left by the logging contractor. Those snags dropped for safety reasons by the logging contractor will be left in place. Trees marked with two orange bands will be operator created snags and cut as high as safely possible above the ground.
- Dwarf mistletoe infected trees provide important habitat to a variety of wildlife species and will be left individually or in clumps strategically across the unit (lower hillside, adjacent to non-impacted tree species, draw bottoms, etc.). The goal is to provide habitat benefits from dwarf mistletoe infected trees while minimizing impacts to other leave trees in the unit.

Additional elements of this proposal may include:

- Slash disposal where debris from timber harvest operations (limbs, tops, etc.) will be piled and trailed at landings in preparation for burning. Slash burning will be carried out after the timber harvest work has been completed. All slash burning will be completed as per Department of Natural Resources and Department of Ecology regulations.
- Pre-Commercial Thinning/Slashing: The variable density harvest units will be re-evaluated after harvest operations have been completed to assess the need for pre-commercial thinning and/or slashing.
- Close and/or abandon selected roads, at the discretion of the local Wildlife Area Manager, after project completion.
- Prescribed broadcast fire in selected units dependent upon management needs and available funding.

The goal of future treatments will be to continue restoring forest stand structure and species composition within the historic range of conditions found on these sites before 1880, when natural disturbance regimes were the primary ecological process.

As part of this proposal, 3,955 feet of new road will be constructed. These new roads will be abandoned to Washington Forest Practice standards after completion of thinning activities, unless road access is needed for prescribed burning purposes beyond this date. This work will include installing undrivable water bars, spreading slash and debris over the road prism, and grass seeding with a mix of native species.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
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**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** Units 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the WDFW Chelan Wildlife Area, approximately 8 miles north of Cashmere, Chelan County, Washington: Multiple sections in Townships 24N and 25N and Ranges 19E and 20E.

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law<sup>1</sup> does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.<sup>2</sup> **We will not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on June 4, 2021**.

**Method of Comment:**

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Lisa Wood

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

**Address:** P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/closed-final>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address above or email [SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov).

**DATE OF ISSUE:** May 21, 2021

**SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 21-019.dns

*Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format or language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact the Title VI/ADA Compliance Coordinator by phone at 360-902-2349, TTY (711), or email ([Title6@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Title6@dfw.wa.gov)).*