

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the [SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS \(part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [\[HELP\]](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: **Beaver Lake Inlet Maintenance**
2. Name of applicant: **Kari Dingman, Assistant Wildlife Area Manager**
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

2134 Tucannon Road, Pomeroy, WA 99347
509-843-1530 Kari.Dingman@dfw.wa.gov

4. Date checklist prepared: **8-17-22**
5. Agency requesting checklist: **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife**
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):
Annual summer maintenance
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.
Yes. Annual maintenance at the Beaver Lake Inlet structure to keep water flowing into Beaver and Watson lakes for put-and-take fishery on the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area. Specific details on the larger Beaver and Watson Lakes project are not yet available and we are waiting for funding to move forward with design and construction.
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.
 - **The WT Wooten Floodplain Management Plan (2012, revised 2014) has completed a SEPA review for design work on the lakes and habitat projects (DNS 16-054). The Wooten FMP discusses proposed future work at several locations, including Beaver and Watson Lakes, on a broad scale along with general information on the work locations. Specific details on the Beaver and Watson Lakes project are not yet available and are waiting for funding to move forward with design and construction. Specific projects under the Wooten FMP will undergo separate separate SEPA review as appropriate when project-specific details are available.**
 - **Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex Management Plan, 2018**
9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.
 - **None known of**
10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.
We already have a Shorelines Exemption (2017-007) from the previous HPA
11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)
The Tucannon Lakes were constructed in the early 1950s to provide a put-and-take fishery to the public. There are 8 man-made lakes of which 6 are fed by diversions from the Tucannon River. Each of the lakes with river diversions has its own unique set of challenges in keeping water flowing into the lake during the summer months when river levels are at their lowest.

This project focuses on the Beaver Lake inlet. The water flows from the Tucannon River through the Beaver Lake inlet structure into Beaver Lake, then over the Beaver Lake overflow structure into Watson Lake. The Tucannon River has moved and changed over the years and it is more challenging some years to keep water flowing into Beaver and Watson lakes to keep the hatchery-raised rainbow trout alive during the summer months.

The purpose for instream work at the Beaver Lake inlet is to keep the inlet channel clear of debris and to keep water flowing into Beaver and Watson lakes. Annually there is a need to hand-place rocks from the riverbed and an 8-foot piece of plywood in the Tucannon River to construct a wing-dam to divert streamflow into the Beaver Lake inlet. Occasionally, after a spring high-flow event, there is a need to use a large excavator to clear sediment and debris out of the Beaver Lake inlet channel and rebuild the permanent wing-dam structure to get water flowing into the lakes again.

The project site is approximately .13 acres in size and the majority of the work will occur instream during the summer months. During the periods when an excavator is needed the excavator will operate as minimally as possible on the bank to reduce the amount of damage caused to the adjacent wetland. The minimum amount of material needed to re-establish water flow to the diversion site will be removed, and all waste material from cleaning out the inlet channel will be deposited above the high-water mark in an upland area near the site.

This environmental review covers only the Beaver Lake Inlet Annual Summer Maintenance which consists of placing rocks and plywood and occasional excavator use. This maintenance work needs to be conducted annually but details and funding are not yet available for the larger Beaver and Watson Lakes project under the Wooten FMP. This review is not intended to circumvent any requirement for environmental review of an individual project, where required under SEPA.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

The Beaver Lake inlet is located on the Tucannon River on the WT Wooten Wildlife Area in Township 9 North, Range 41 East, in the southeast ¼ of the southeast ¼ of Section 3.

The Beaver Lake inlet is located in Columbia County. It is 13 miles south of Pomeroy and 15 miles east of Dayton.

B. Environmental Elements [\[HELP\]](#)

1. **Earth** [\[help\]](#)

a. General description of the site:

(circle one): **Flat**, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____

The actual project work will be completed in the Tucannon River channel which has only a slight downstream slope in it.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

The steepest slope on the site would be the riverbank at approximately 90 degrees in places.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

The soils are cobble and gravely fines in the riverbed. There are some larger boulders in the vicinity of the Beaver Lake inlet and there are large columnar basalt upstream of the inlet that were placed in the 1990s to create a weir dam. On the river right at the site there is a wetland with a spring creek running through it.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

WDFW is not aware of any unstable soils in the area.

e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Annually rocks located in the riverbed will be hand-placed to create a wing-dam to direct flow into the Beaver Lake inlet. An 8-foot piece of plywood will also be placed in the river channel to help direct flow into the inlet.

After a high-flow event that fills the Beaver Lake inlet channel with sediment and debris, an excavator will be used to clean out the inlet channel. The minimum amount of material needed to re-establish water flow to the diversion site will be removed.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

No erosion should occur as a result of proposed actions.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

None

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Work will occur during the summer months when precipitation and water levels are lower.

Large equipment will only be used when necessary to clean out the inlet channel.

2. **Air** [\[help\]](#)

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

No emissions will occur during the manual movement of the rocks. Emissions from the large excavator will occur during the brief periods that large equipment will be necessary to clean out the inlet channel.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

No

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

Standard emission control converters and mufflers would be in use by excavator.

3. Water [\[help\]](#)

- a. Surface Water: [\[help\]](#)

- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

Yes, the Tucannon River. The Tucannon River is fed by tributaries and springs along the Tucannon Valley and feeds into the Snake River.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

Yes. Rocks from the riverbed will be hand-piled to form a wing-dam to direct river flow into the Beaver Lake inlet. An 8-foot piece of plywood will also be placed in the Tucannon River to help direct flow into the inlet structure. Occasionally after spring high-water events that have filled the Beaver inlet channel with sediment and debris, a large excavator will be needed to clean out the inlet channel and replace the large boulders that make up the wing-dam. All waste material from cleaning out the inlet channel will be deposited above the high-water mark in an upland area near the site.

- 3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

The amount of material that will be removed from the inlet channel will vary depending on the severity of the high-flow event and how much material was deposited into the inlet channel. The minimum amount of material needed to re-establish water flow to the diversion site shall be removed.

- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No surface water withdrawals or diversions will be required.

5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Yes, the entire project site is within a 100-year floodplain.

6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No

b. Ground Water: [\[help\]](#)

1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

NO

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

Not Applicable

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

Not Applicable

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

No

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:

Equipment will only be used when necessary to clean out the Beaver Lake inlet channel after a high-flow event has filled the channel with sediment and debris. Equipment will only operate from one side of the Tucannon River in order to avoid disturbance of the existing vegetation on the opposite bank.

4. **Plants** [\[help\]](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

_X_deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other

- evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- shrubs
- grass
- pasture
- crop or grain
- Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

No vegetation will be removed. Vegetation on the bank may be damaged when large equipment is needed to clean out the Beaver Lake inlet channel.

c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None are known at this time

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

None

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

Spotted knapweed, Canada thistle

5. **Animals** [\[help\]](#)

a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

birds: **hawk, heron, eagle (golden and bald), songbirds**, other: **Lewis woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, osprey**

mammals: **deer, bear, elk, beaver**, other: **river otter, raccoon, bighorn sheep**

fish: **bass, salmon, trout**, herring, shellfish, other: **steelhead, spring Chinook, bull trout**

The full list of PHS species that may be in the area includes: Columbia spotted frog (*Rana luteiventris*), Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), Bull trout/Dolly varden (*Salvelinus malma*), Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus nelson*), Northwest white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus ochrourus*), Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), and Bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*).

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Summer steelhead, spring Chinook, and bull trout are found in the Tucannon River.

The full list of ESA species occurring in the vicinity includes: Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), Bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*),

Washington ground squirrel (*Urocitellus washingtoni*), Spalding's catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*), Spring Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), and Summer steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*).

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Yes, the Tucannon River hosts several species of anadromous fish. The migratory bird flyways are located east and west of the Tucannon River basin.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

Keeping water flowing into Beaver and Watson lakes will keep the stocked rainbow trout alive during the hot summer months to provide a put-and-take fishery for the public.

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

None are known at this time

6. Energy and Natural Resources [\[help\]](#)

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

N/A

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

N/A

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

N/A

7. Environmental Health [\[help\]](#)

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur as a result of this proposal? If so, describe.

There is a potential for a hazardous waste spill during the periods that large equipment are operating to clean out the Beaver Lake inlet channel.

1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

None are known at this time

2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.

None are known at this time

3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating

life of the project.

None are known at this time

- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

None are known at this time

- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

None are known at this time

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

None

- 2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

The large excavator will create noise during the brief periods it is need to clean out the Beaver Lake inlet channel.

- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

No special noise reduction efforts are planned.

8. Land and Shoreline Use [\[help\]](#)

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

The current use of the site is the WT Wooten Wildlife Area. The proposed project will not affect land uses on adjacent properties.

- b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

There were several homesteads along the Tucannon River, including one just upstream from the current Beaver Lake inlet structure, but there has never been any agricultural or forest land use of long-term commercial significance in the project area.

- 1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

No

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

There is a concrete structure and culvert where the Beaver Lake inlet channel leaves the Tucannon River. There is also a wing-dam made out of large boulders to direct flow into the

inlet channel. Upstream from the inlet channel there is a rock weir-dam that was constructed in the 1990s using columnar basalt.

- d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?
No structures will be demolished.
- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?
Recreational, "Recreation 1"
- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?
Recreational, "Recreation 1"
- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?
The Shoreline Master Program identifies a 200-foot buffer, from OHW, as the shoreline zone on the Tucannon River. The project lies within this zone.
- h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.
Yes, the wetlands adjacent to the project area are given protection under local state and federal laws.
- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?
None
- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?
None
- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:
NONE
- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:
The proposed use is fully in line with land use planning objectives for the property.
- m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:
This is not an issue given the long-time land use objectives for this area.

9. Housing [\[help\]](#)

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.
N/A
- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.
N/A

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

N/A

10. Aesthetics [\[help\]](#)

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

N/A

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

No views would be altered or obstructed

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

No aesthetic impacts will occur

11. Light and Glare [\[help\]](#)

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

None

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

None

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

None

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

None

12. Recreation [\[help\]](#)

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

The WT Wooten Wildlife Area is 16,481 acres, all of which is open to the public for hiking, hunting, bird watching, and general recreation. The Tucannon River is open for fishing for part of the year, in addition to the lakes. Beaver and Watson lakes are in the immediate vicinity and directly impacted by the project. Watson Lake is stocked annually with hatchery-raised rainbow trout to provide a put-and-take fishery for the public.

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

No

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

None

13. Historic and cultural preservation [\[help\]](#)

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers ? If so, specifically describe.

There are remnants of an old homestead approximately 500-yards upstream from the project site against the bottom of the hill. There is no known record of any recent cultural surveys in the area or of the site being listed in any registers.

- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

There are remnants of an old homestead approximately 500-yards upstream from the project site against the bottom of the hill. There is no known record of any recent cultural surveys in the area or of the site being listed in any registers.

- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

No cultural review or consultation has been done on the project site to date.

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

No upland ground disturbance is planned for the project. Minimal instream ground disturbance is planned for hand-placing the rocks to create a wing-dam.

14. Transportation [\[help\]](#)

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

State Highway 12 runs SE WA and the Tucannon Road leaves Highway 12 and runs south through the WT Wooten Wildlife Area. The Tucannon Road becomes a United States Forest Service Road at approximately milepost 21.

- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

No public transit is available in the vicinity.

- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

None

- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

NO

- e. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

No

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

No new trips per day will be generated.

- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

No

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

None

15. Public Services [\[help\]](#)

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

The site already has fire protection from WDFW, WA Department of Natural Resources, and United States Forest Service. Police protection is already provided through WDFW Enforcement and Columbia County Sheriff Department.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

No increase on public services anticipated

16. Utilities [\[help\]](#)

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site:

electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other _____

The fish screen in the Beaver Lake inlet canal is run off electricity. There is a power line that runs up the Tucannon valley, ending at Camp Wooten Environmental Learning Center.

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

None

C. Signature [\[HELP\]](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: _____ Kari Dingman _____

Name of signee _____ Kari Dingman _____

Position and Agency/Organization ___ Wildlife Area Manager, WT Wooten Wildlife Area, WDFW

Date Submitted: ___ 1-19-2023 _____