



**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT
OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
FINAL DETERMINATION OF
NON-SIGNIFICANCE
May 3, 2007**

State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW)
OAK CREEK WILDLIFE AREA EXTENSION OF THE ELDERBERRY NORTH
PRESCRIBED FIRE, PHASE 1

Description of Proposal: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing to collaborate with The Naches Ranger District of the Wenatchee National Forest to expand the previously analyzed Elderberry prescribed burn project on Forest Service lands into adjacent ownership of WDFW lands to meet ecological, economic, logistical, and safety objectives. Prescribed burning is proposed for approximately 573 acres of these WDFW lands (Section 1: 3 acres; Section 3: 400 acres; Section 5: 170 acres – see attached map 2). The prescribed burn would be conducted during the spring if conditions permit, but may be conducted in fall.

Prescribed burning would occur in dry forest and woodlands reducing fuel and crown fire hazard and reintroducing fire to ecological systems that historically burned frequently. In addition, this proposal reduces the amount of built fire line by 12,840 feet (on WDFW and Forest Service property boundary lines) by using natural and existing fuel breaks; reducing ground/soil disturbance and savings \$27,606.

The proposed area for treatment is predominately located on southerly aspects that support dry forest plant communities that evolved with a predominance of frequent low intensity fire. Fire has been successfully excluded from the project area since around 1930. Objectives include: 1) treatment of multiple layered vegetative communities in a way that encourages the growth of single-layered fire resilient, drought tolerant, and insect and disease resistant plant communities; 2) reduce likelihood of high severity fires and decrease resistance to fire control efforts by reducing surface and ladder fuels 3) improve the health and vigor of native shrubs, grasses, and forbs by reducing tree shade and stimulating shrub growth to reduce the adverse effects of repeated browsing, shading, and fire exclusion. Meeting these objectives has the effect improving wildlife habitat for species that have a high fidelity to dry forest plant communities.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), John G. McGowan, 1667 Hwy 12 Naches, WA 98937

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Located approximately 13 air miles West of the city of Naches (see map) in the Oak Creek Wildlife Area, Naches, Washington, Yakima County; **Sections 1,3,5, Township 14 North, Range 15 East** WM These Sections were purchased from Plum Creek Timber by The Nature Conservancy and transferred to WDFW in 2006

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

WDFW has determined that this proposal will have no probable significant adverse impacts on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). We made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after review of the environmental checklist and other information on file with us. This information is available to the public on request.

We issued this DNS under WAC 197-11-340(2). We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date of issuance of this DNS. If you have comments about this DNS or this proposal, we must receive your comments by: **May 02, 2007**. When you send us your comments, please provide the name of proposal in your comment letter and mail it to:

Responsible Official: Teresa A. Eturaspe

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501

You can also send your comments via email to: SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov

You can also send you comments via fax to: (360) 902-2946.

If you have questions about details of the proposal, contact: John G. McGowan, (509) 653-2390

If you have questions about our Determination of Nonsignificance, please contact:

Teresa A. Eturaspe **Phone:** (360) 902-2575 **Fax:** (360) 902-2946 or
email: SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov

DATE OF ISSUE: April 18, 2007 **SIGNATURE:** 

SEPA Log Number: 07 -030. dns

Distribution of Environmental Document:

Department of Ecology, Environmental Review Section, Olympia
Department of Natural Resources, SEPA Center, Olympia
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Upper Columbia River Basin Field Office, Spokane
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle
NOAA - Fisheries, Seattle
Yakima County Planning Department, Yakima
Yakima County Commissioners, Yakima
Yakama Nation, Toppenish
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission, Portland, OR
Department of Transportation, S Central Region, Yakima
State Parks and Recreation Commission, Olympia
WDFW, Habitat Program, Region 3, Yakima
WDFW, Fish Program, Region 3, Yakima
WDFW, Wildlife Program, Region 3, Yakima