

WAC 197-11-960 Environmental checklist.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about governmental regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

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.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

Complete this checklist for nonproject proposals, even though questions may be answered "does not apply." IN ADDITION, complete the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D).

For nonproject actions, the references in the checklist to the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proposer," and "affected geographic area," respectively.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of Proposed project if applicable.

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Fuel Reduction and Fire Regime Restoration Plan Implementation.

2. Name of applicant: **WDFW**

**Dale Swedberg, Wildlife Area Manager
1680 Sinlahekin Road
P.O. Box C
Loomis, WA 98827**

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person: **PO Box C Loomis, WA 98827. (509) 223-3358; Dale Swedberg**

4. Date checklist prepared: **July 1, 2009**

5. Agency requesting checklist: **Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife**

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): **This project is the first phase of a longer-range plan to reduce fuels on the entire Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. The proposed schedule for phase 1 is as follows.**

- **Summer 2009 - Seed collection**
- **Summer and Fall 2009 Fire history study**
- **Fall 2009 – Possible Prescribed burning.**
- **August 2009 through January 2010 - Fuel reduction thinning**
- **Spring 2010- Possible prescribed burning**

- Spring-Summer 2010 - Weed control in thinned areas
- Spring-Summer 2010 - Seed collection
- Fall 2010 - Prescribed burning
- Fall 2010 – Possible Seeding
- August 2010 through January 2011 - Fuel reduction thinning
- Spring 2011 - Possible prescribed burning
- Spring-Summer 2011 - Weed control in thinned and burned areas
- Summer 2011 - Seed collection
- Fall 2011 - Prescribed burning
- Fall 2011 - Seeding
- Spring 2012 – Possible prescribed burning
- Spring 2012 - Weed control in thinned and burned areas

Additional phases may occur as grant funding becomes available that would entail similar thinning and burning on the other portions of the Wildlife Area. SEPA reviews will occur for other phases when they occur.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Yes. Other phases will occur on other portions of the Wildlife area when additional funding becomes available.

This project is the first phase of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (SWA) Fuels Reduction and Fire Restoration Plan to restore the sustainability, functionality, productivity and resiliency to the landscape so that fire can be used as a tool to maintain the ecosystem. A set of burn plans has been created that covers the entire SWA which would be burned over a ten-year cycle. If the plan is fully implemented, out of a total area of 14,370 acres in the SWA, 5,659 acres have planned burns on them with 2,588 acres in conifer forests that may also require mechanical treatment. Fuels will be reduced on another 2,716 acres of coniferous forest via hand, mechanical or helicopter thinning only.

Additional phases will occur as grant funding becomes available that would entail similar thinning and burning on the other portions of the Wildlife Area. SEPA reviews will occur for other phases when they occur.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

a) Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Fuels reduction and Fire Regime Restoration Plan. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia. 2006. (Available at <http://okanogan1.com/ecology/stewardship/swa/index.htm>)

b) Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2006. Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Management Plan. Wildlife Management Program, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia. 166 pp. (Available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/sinlahekin/unit.php?searchbv=unit&search=Sinlahekin)

- Contained within the 2006. Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Management Plan as APPENDIX 3 is the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Fire Management Plan

c) Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2003. Game Management Plan, (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/game/management>) Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, Washington, USA

d) Vegetation Inventory 2003 - Sinlahekin Wildlife Area - (Available at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/sinlahekin/plant_inventory.pdf)

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.

There is a Natural Resources Conservation Service grant that simultaneously contributes to the scale of restoration work on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

- Forest Practice Application
- Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Burn Permit.
- DNR smoke approval
- WDFW Hydraulic Project Approvals

- **Cultural resource surveys and Section 106 consultation with the Central Washington University, Colville Nation and Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation**

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.)

This project is the first phase in an effort to restore ecologically appropriate fire, on a landscape scale, to the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area fire-dependent ecosystem. Primary goals of this project are: 1) to reduce and/or reconfigure the, historically-uncharacteristic, accumulation of fuels by thinning, pruning, piling and burning; and 2) using prescribed fire to restore ecologically appropriate fire to the landscape. The project will begin implementation of the recently completed Sinlahekin Fuels Reduction and Fire Regime Restoration Plan and will compliment ongoing cooperative efforts with the Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service whose lands respectively intermingle and adjoin the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area.

This project will include an estimated

- **800-1,000 acres of fuels reduction (hand thinning, ground based mechanical and helicopter)**
- **400 acres of seeding**
- **1,800-2,000 acres of prescribe burning**
- **enhanced weed monitoring and weed control in areas thinned to reduce fuels.**

This is the first phase of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (SWA) Fuels Reduction and Fire Restoration Plan involves projects that will restore the sustainability, functionality, productivity and resiliency to the landscape so that fire can be used as a tool to maintain this fire-dependent ecosystem. Additional phases will occur as grant funding becomes available that would entail similar thinning and burning on the other portions of the Wildlife Area. A set of burn plans has been created that covers the entire SWA, which would be burned over a ten-year cycle. If the plan is fully implemented, out of a total area of 14,370 acres in the SWA, 5,659 acres have planned burns on them with 2,588 acres in conifer forests that may also require mechanical treatment. Fuels will be reduced on another 2,716 acres of coniferous forest via hand, mechanical or helicopter thinning only. Future SEPA reviews will occur for other phases if and when they are funded.

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 (not reasonably available), 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.

Street address:

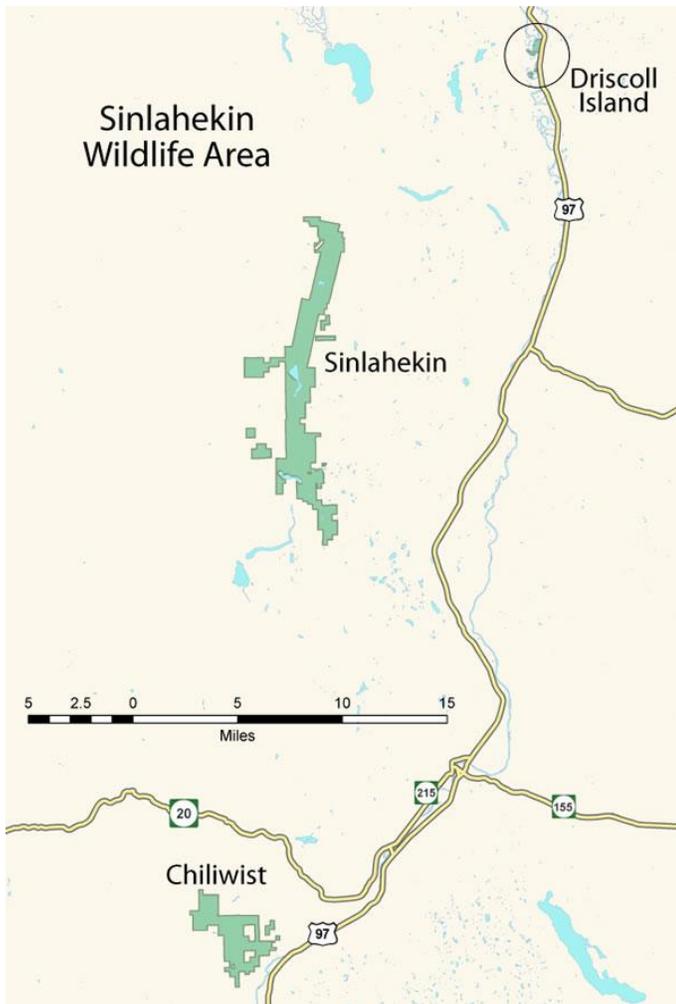
**1680 Sinlahekin Road
Loomis, WA 98827**

The Sinlahekin Wildlife Area is located in North-Central Washington, about 2.5 miles south of Loomis, Okanogan County, primarily within the Sinlahekin Valley. The worksite is, generally that portion of WDFW owned lands north of Blue Lake.

The Sinlahekin Wildlife Area (SWA) is comprised of about 14,000 acres. Of this acreage, 480 acres are leased from Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), 2,834 acres are Federally owned under United States Department of Interior - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) jurisdiction and the remaining acreage, about 11,000 acres, is owned by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

All lands owned and/or managed as the SWA are located in T38N R25E Sections 13-14, 23-26, 34-36; T37N R25E Sections 2&3, 9-11, 15&16, and 21&22.

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Vicinity Map



B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

a. General description of the site (circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other

The wildlife area is characterized by steep slopes rising from a valley floor at an elevation of about 1,300 feet to mountain tops slightly over 4,000 feet.

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

Vertical rock cliffs

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 prime farmland.

Soils of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area have been mapped. The soil map is available on the NRCS Soil Data Website. General descriptions characterize the soils as of “deep to very shallow mostly forested soils and rock outcrop on mountainous uplands” and “deep to very shallow mostly grassland soils, rock outcrop and badland on dissected upland plains and terraces.”

Agricultural soils are limited in on the site. Wildlife food plots are maintained in the form of dryland spring and fall grains (about 60 acres), dryland alfalfa (about 60 acres) and irrigated alfalfa (about 45 acres).

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

No.

e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

No filling or grading is associated with this proposal beyond road maintenance.

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

There will be short term potential increases in erosion in association with each thinning and burning operation but erosion is expected to be minimal given the staging and design of the proposal. As thinning and burning operations are intended to produce a vegetated mosaic, in which vegetation controls the sediment that is generated by exposed soils. Cover of understory plant species will be reduced initially post burn, but majority of species respond vigorously after fire and an increase in plant cover is expected in the near term. Thinning operations will comply with the Forest Practices Act measures to reduce the potential for overland flow of sediment to streams.

Given the expected reduction in ground fuels via thinning and mild prescribed fires under this proposal, the impact of future severe wildfires on soils and resulting potential erosion is expected to be reduced.

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

None beyond existing surfaces that comprise <1% of the site.

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

Measures to reduce or control erosion associated with thinning

Thinning operations will comply with the Forest Practices Act provisions for preventing erosion and protecting stream buffers. Strategies to minimize the potential for erosion include aerial yarding with helicopters on steep slopes (>35%) to minimize soil disturbance. Work will be done in the winter on snow or frozen ground to the maximum degree feasible and skidding will be minimized.

Measures to reduce or control erosion associated with prescribed burning

The proposed prescribed burns are planned to be low intensity so that mineral soil exposure is minimized and vegetation retains or quickly regains its ability to stabilize soils. Measures to ensure that fires minimize soil exposure include burning:

- **only in areas where fuels have been maintained at or have been reduced to low levels.**
- **only under mild weather conditions.**
- **Underburning fires will be relatively, small <100 acres, and set in a staggered manner such that so that potential sediment source areas are spatially and temporally limited.**
- **Slash will be piled and burned in small, i.e., less than 6' diameter piles minimizing mineral soil exposure**

2. Air

a) What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

Wood smoke will be produced during prescribed burning operations. Smoke Management Approval, per Washington State Smoke Management Plan, will be obtained from DNR prior to ignition of burns. Burns will occur in September through November (perhaps 20-30 days total) in both fall of 2010 and fall of 2011. It is possible that a similar number of burn days may occur in March-April of 2011.

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:

- **Comply with the DNR burn permit and smoke management plan.**

3. Water

a. Surface:

- 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.

Sinlahekin Creek Watershed. Sinlahekin Creek is a perennial fish bearing. Tributaries include Sarsapkin Creek, Cecile Creek and one other unnamed tributary. The steam system includes Blue Lake and 4 impoundments including Forde Lake, Reflection Pond, Conner Lake and Headquarters Road impoundment.

- 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.

Thinning activities within 200 of waters may include snag generation for habitat enhancement and to favor deciduous tree over conifers in riparian zones. Prescribed fires will burn vegetation near some water bodies to restore natural vegetation communities along water bodies.

- 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.

No dredging or filling is associated with this proposal.

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

Yes. Water may be pumped into trucks for fire control. Estimated average water removal quantities will be two, 200 gallon tanks per day but up to five, 200 gallon tanks may need to be filled. A 2000 gallon Tender will be onsite per the burn permit – water for the Tender may come from surface water onsite or from well water also.

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

No.

- 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 discharges of waste materials to surface waters.

b. Ground:

- 1) Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Ground water may be used to supply water trucks that will be used during prescribed burns. Up to 200 gallons per day when burning occurs.

- 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 waste materials are associated with this project.

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.

There will be short term potential increases in erosion in association with each thinning and burning operation but erosion is expected to be minimal given the staging and design of the proposal. As thinning and burning operations are intended to produce a vegetated mosaic, in which vegetation controls the sediment that is generated by exposed soils. Cover of understory plant species will be reduced initially post burn, but majority of species respond vigorously after fire and an increase in plant cover is expected in the near term. Thinning operations will comply with the Forest Practices Act measures to reduce the potential for overland flow of sediment to streams.

Given the expected reduction in ground fuels via thinning and mild prescribed fires under this proposal, the impact of future

wildfires on soils and resulting potential erosion is expected to be significant reduced.

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

No waste material is directly associated with this proposal. There is potential that ash will reach surface water (intermittent and perennial streams) for a short period of time and at low levels. Ash, however, is an important component of the nutrient cycle in a fire dependent community and should not be considered a waste material in association with prescribed burns. Given the low to intensity of proposed prescribed burn and buffers of unburned vegetation, it is likely that very low levels of ash will reach any surface waters. Furthermore, the expected mid- to long term positive response of understory vegetation will reduce erosion potential and reduce the potential for high intensity and severe wildfires under severe fire weather conditions in the future.

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

Measures to reduce impacts associated with thinning

Thinning operations will comply with the Forest Practices Act provisions for preventing erosion and protecting stream buffers. Strategies to minimize the potential for erosion include aerial yarding with helicopters on steep slopes (>35%) to minimize soil disturbance. Work will be done in the winter on snow or frozen ground to the maximum degree feasible and skidding will be minimized.

Measures to reduce impacts associated with prescribed burning

The proposed prescribed burns are planned to be low intensity so that mineral soil exposure is minimized and vegetation retains or quickly regains its ability to stabilize soils. Measures to ensure that fires minimize soil exposure include burning:

- **only in areas where fuels have been maintained or have been reduced to low levels.**
- **only under mild weather conditions.**
- **fires will be relatively, small <100 acres, and set in a staggered manner such that so that potential sediment source areas are spatially and temporally limited.**

4. Plants

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

- _X_ deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- _X_ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- _X_ shrubs
- _X_ grass
- _X_ pasture
- _X_ crop or grain
- _X_ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- _X_ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

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

Vegetation will not be removed as per land development projects. Vegetation will be altered in that the project will begin to reverse the effects of a century of fire suppression. Vegetation alteration will focus on removing excessive quantities of fuels, i.e., trees and shrubs, that have led to increased fire hazards, reduced habitat quality/quantity for mule deer, bighorn sheep and other fire disturbance-dependent species quality and reduced structural diversity. Overstocked forest will be restored to more open “park-like” condition favoring fire dependent species like Ponderosa pine over Douglas fir. Over the next ten years the goal is as follows: Out of a total area of 14,370 acres, 5,659 acres have planned burns on them with 2,588 acres in conifer forests that may also require mechanical treatment. Another 2,716 acres of coniferous forest that are outside of planned burn units that will be thinned via hand, mechanical treatment or helicopters.

This phase 1 project will include the following

- **833 acres of fuels reduction (thinning by hand, mechanical, and helicopter)**
- **400 acres of seeding**

- 1,833 acres of prescribe burning
- enhanced weed monitoring and weed control in areas thinned to reduce fuels.

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

The yellow Lady's Slippers, a state threatened species, occurs at 2 known sites. Threats & Management concerns from <http://www1.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/refdesk/fguide/pdf/cvpa.pdf> include timber harvest, development, grazing, collecting, fire suppression, and prescribed fires during the growing season. Fire suppression is an identified threat as well as timber harvest, development, grazing, collecting and prescribed fire during the growing season. As apart of the proposed action steps, e.g., provide protection from timber harvest impacts and fire suppression and prescribed burning during the growing season, will be taken to assure the continued existence of yellow Lady's Slippers at their respective locations.

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

Seeding with native plants will occur on up 400 acres. Seeding will primarily occur in areas where soils are disturbed.

5. Animals

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

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other: **Approximately 125 species of birds.**

mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other: **Approximately 43 species of mammals**

fish: bass, trout, shellfish, other: **Approximately 16 species of fish**

Also present

13 species of reptiles and amphibians

87 species of butterflies.

75 species of spiders

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

Sharp-tailed grouse, a State Threatened species and a Federal Species of Concern, were regularly present in certain areas of the SWA prior to 1983 and thereafter observed intermittently. Individual sighting have been reported since 1983 but not documented. No sharp-tailed grouse have been observed during agency surveys since 1983. As prescribed fires will be set under mild fire conditions, birds should be able to avoid injury by walking or fly away from prescribed fires. As most prescribed fires will be set in the fall, most burning will be done outside of the nesting season.

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

The general area is used as mule deer winter range and migration route. This vegetation manipulation proposal is to increase the winter browse for mule deer, thus would increase the area's importance as a migration area.

The Wildlife Area is also on the Pacific flyway for waterfowl migration. Sandhill cranes also migrate through the area. Neotropical songbirds come through the area on their way north.

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

The project is expected to improve conditions for many wildlife species, particularly the ponderosa pine obligate species including flammulated owls, pygmy nuthatches and white headed woodpeckers that require late seral conditions. The project will also rejuvenate deer winter range, improve forest health, and reduce risk of catastrophic wildfires that could greatly harm wildlife.

6. Energy and natural resources

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.

Does not apply

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

Does not apply

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:

Does not apply

7. Environmental health

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 prescribed fires to become wildfires but the Burn Plan sets conditions to minimize the risk. Health hazards associated with smoke produced from this project will be fully considered in a “smoke management plan”

1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

A medical emergency plan will be developed. This plan will be implemented in the event of serious or critical injury during the thinning or prescribed fire operations.

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

Health hazards associated with smoke produced from this project will be fully considered in a “smoke management plan”

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.

Thinning crews and log trucks are expected to travel to and from the proposed site on existing roads over a few months each year in the morning (between 7:00-9:00 AM) and evening (4:00-6:00 PM) creating very low levels of noise. Ground-based thinning operations will generate noise from power tools and mechanized logging equipment? Helilogging will produce aircraft noise is to produce nearly constant noise during work hours that are expected to be close to normal working hours (8:00AM-6:00 PM). High costs will likely limit helilogging to two weeks or less. Helicopters may be used to a lesser degree for starting fires.

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

Limit the amount of time for aerial logging by limiting its use to only those slopes that can't be feasibly treated any other way. Minimize the number of trips to and from site as feasible.

8. Land and shoreline use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

The site is managed for wildlife, their associated habitats, and public recreation.

b. Has the site been used for agriculture? If so, describe.

A small portion of the site has been used for agriculture. Wildlife food plots are maintained in the form of dryland spring grains (about 60 acres), dryland alfalfa (about 60 acres) and irrigated alfalfa (about 45 acres).

c. Describe any structures on the site.

There are a few small administrative buildings on the site including an office, pole barn, bunk house and small outbuildings, These structures are surrounded by but not located within the proposed thinning and burn units.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Minimum requirement district

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Listed as unclassified, an area of secondary priority for Recreational Development and class two general recreational Area. Confirmed with Okanogan County Planning Department on June 30, 2009.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

Connor, Forde, and Blue Lakes are designated conservancy shorelines, as well as Sinlahekin Creek and associated wetlands. Confirmed with Okanogan County Planning Department on June 30, 2009.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? If so, specify.

The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife considers the entire Wildlife Area as environmentally sensitive. It was set aside in 1939 to preserve mule deer habitat.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

Does not apply.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

Does not apply.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

Does not apply.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

Proposed measures are congruent with the WDFW Wildlife Management plan and are supported by Wildlife Manager and WDFW staff.

9. Housing

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

Does not apply.

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

Does not apply.

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

Does not apply.

10. Aesthetics

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

Does not apply.

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

Thinning of tree cover will occur in a large portion of the project. The project will enhance views by thinning obstructing vegetation, increase variety and health of plant communities and favor larger, more majestic trees over dense stands of small, unhealthy trees that are more susceptible to disease and catastrophic stand-killing fires. Fires may darken portions of the landscape for weeks to months but stimulate more robust and diverse flora growth shortly thereafter.

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

This project is expected to improve aesthetics. Thinning and prescribed burning activities will be done in phases to gradually create a natural looking mosaic of healthy plant communities.

11. Light and glare

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

Does not apply.

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

Does not apply.

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

Does not apply.

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

Does not apply.

12. Recreation

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

Many forms of recreation including, but not limited to: hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and camping.

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

For safety reasons recreationists will not be allowed within thinning and burning units while work is occurring. It is anticipated that recreationists, however, will be not excluded from more than 10% of the wildlife area at any given time with exclusion areas usually being far smaller. Recreationists may be less inclined to use some treated areas for weeks or months after thinning or burning while vegetation recovers. Treated areas are expected to quickly become more recreationally attractive than before, however, due to open “park-like” esthetics, lush vegetation, and increased deer use. Smoke may be noticeable to recreationists over the entire wildlife area during burning operations but is not anticipated to preclude recreation.

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

Thinning and burning will be phased so that they only occur on small portions of the project site at any time. This approach will ensure that access to the majority of the wildlife area for recreation is maintained at all times.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

No National Register properties were identified on or near the site using the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation’s WISAARD search engine on June 29, 2009. No sites were identified on the Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation’s October 2008 list of Historic Places in Washington. An on-site review of the DAHP database did reveal, however, four sites of interest on or near the property including the Harkin Homestead and three locations with suspected pre-settlement use.

b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

Pictographs approximately ½ north of property. Two potential “peeler” trees exist within project area and food cache sites.

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

A survey will be conducted by a Central Washington University and the Colville Tribe before the project is initiated, and if historic, archeological, scientific, or culturally important discoveries are found, the project will follow mitigation recommendations.

14. Transportation

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

The road system on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area is primitive and limited. Roads consist of gravel or dirt. Sinlahekin Road, a county road, is the primary road on the Wildlife Area. It is a gravel road that runs North–South through the entire project area. See Phase I Site Plan.

b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

No. Rural.

c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

Does not apply.

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

No.

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

Work crews will drive to and from the site and helicopters may be employed during thinning operations.

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

Vehicle traffic increase will be minimal. Thinning will add up to 10 vehicles per day occur in winter when traffic is minimal. Burning will add up to 10 vehicles per day occur in the spring and fall. Most vehicle trips will occur in the morning and evenings.

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

Crews will carpool to work sites to the degree feasible.

15. Public services

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

Increased fire protection may be required as a precaution during prescribed burning operations to prevent prescribed fires to ensure that fires remain in control.

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

Follow burn plans to ensure that the risk of prescribed fire becomes wild fires is minimal.

16. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other.

Does not apply.

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.

Does not apply.

C. SIGNATURE

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: ON FILE- **Dale Swedberg**

Date Submitted: July 1, 2009