



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/WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES LAND EXCHANGE PROJECT PHASE 2. (THIS IS A JOINT SEPA/NEPA PROPOSAL SEE PROJECT DESCRIPTION #11 on checklist.)

**Description of Proposal:** This project is a joint NEPA/SEPA because it involves action by both state and federal agencies. State actions include the exchange properties to consolidate ownership. Federal actions consisting of allowing federal protections related to recreation to be removed from lands transferred away from WDFW and to be placed on the replacement lands that would be transferred to WDFW.

Much of the state public land ownership pattern in eastern Washington today resembles a checkerboard. This is largely a result of how lands were distributed after Washington gained statehood in 1889. Some of the inadvertent effects of that checkerboard ownership pattern are the fragmentation of wildlife habitat, difficulty implementing long term management strategies and viable long term planning, and the higher management costs among different ownerships and management directives. In two large checkerboard landscapes, WDNR and WDFW own or manage every other square mile in a 170,000-acre landscape with different management goals and legal mandates. Exchanging lands would allow each agency to better address its specific management goals. The Phase 2 exchange should not reduce the total amount of public land available for wildlife or recreation. For complete details see attached checklist and referenced EA also available at \* <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>

**Proponent/Applicant:**

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
Jennifer Quann, 600 Capital Way North, Olympia WA 98501-1091

Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)  
Stephan Saunders, P.O. Box 47014, Olympia WA 98504-7014

**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** \*Maps (including parcel lists) showing the parcels included in the Phase 2 exchange and potential future exchanges can be viewed in the Environmental Assessment at \* <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>

The bulk of the lands in this proposed Phase 2 exchange between WDFW and DNR are in Kittitas and Yakima Counties but also include state owned lands in Okanogan, Klickitat, Chelan and Asotin Counties. While each agency's acreage contribution would not be equal due to the different values of land being exchanged (forest land vs. shrub-steppe land), the exchange is expected to be balanced, with each agency receiving the same value as they contribute. Table 1 shows the approximate acreage of potential parcels by county that may be included in the exchange. Table 2 includes the locations of the parcels that would be exchanged. See attached checklist.

**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 30 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 30 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **December 16, 2009**

You can submit your comments by email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov), through the WDFW SEPA website comment link at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>, fax to (360) 902-2946, or mail to the address below. When you send us your comments, please provide the name of the proposal in your comment letter.

**Responsible Official:** Teresa A. Eturaspe

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

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hab/sepa/sepa.htm>. 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 Teresa Eturaspe at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2575.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** November 18, 2009 **SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 09 -067. dns