

**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:

**Cowychee Ditch Fish Screen and Meter**

2. Name of applicant:

**North Yakima Conservation District (NYCD)**

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

**Mike Tobin-NYCD manager or Justin Bader-YTAHP coordinator**

**1606 Perry Street, Suite C**

**Yakima, WA 98902**

**(509) 454-5736 x122**

[mike-tobin@conserveva.net](mailto:mike-tobin@conserveva.net)

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4. Date checklist prepared:

**May 25, 2010**

5. Agency requesting checklist:

**WDFW**

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

**August 1-September 15, 2010**

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

**No, routine operation and maintenance activities using hand tools will ensure the fish screen operates in compliance with state and federal criteria.**

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

- **An Archaeological Survey and Inventory of the Cowychee Ditch Fish Screen Construction and Piped Irrigation Project, Yakima County, Washington (Landreau and Cain 2010) for NHPA Section 106 consultation**
- **ESA Section 7 consultation with USFWS and NMFS**
- **JARPA**

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 are none**

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

- **ESA Section 7 consultation with USFWS and NMFS**
- **NHPA Section 106 consultation with THPO and SHPO**
- **CWA Section 404 from US Army Corps of Engineers**
- **CWA Section 401 from Ecology**
- **HPA from WDFW**
- **Shoreline, Floodplain, Critical Areas Review by Yakima County**
- **Access Agreement from WDFW**

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 NYCD proposes to install a WDFW and NMFS compliant fish screen and water meter on the Cowychee Ditch irrigation diversion through the Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP). This diversion is located at river mile 12 on Cowiche Creek, a priority stream for salmonid recovery in the Yakima Basin. Currently, this diversion is unscreened and unmetered, putting juvenile salmonids and other resident fishes at risk of entrainment into the irrigation system. The existing headgate will be upgraded such that there is better water control and it can be completely sealed. The new fish screen will be installed behind the head gate with the fish bypass extending from the screen back to the creek as shown in the design drawing. Temporary access may include some vegetative clearing, but the entire area will be replanted with suitable native vegetation upon completion. Routine maintenance will be completed by members of the Cowychee Ditch Water Users Association using only hand tools.**

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.

- **Located on (South Fork) Cowiche Creek at River Mile 12**
- **WRIA 38-Cowiche Creek is a tributary to the Naches River**
- **Near 3000 Cowiche Mill Road, Cowiche, WA 98923; near intersection with Sunset Road**

- Parcel # 16143613403—Part of the Cowiche Unit of WDFW's Oak Creek Wildlife Area
- NE ¼ Section 36, Township 14, Range 16
- 46.66025° N; -120.762833° W

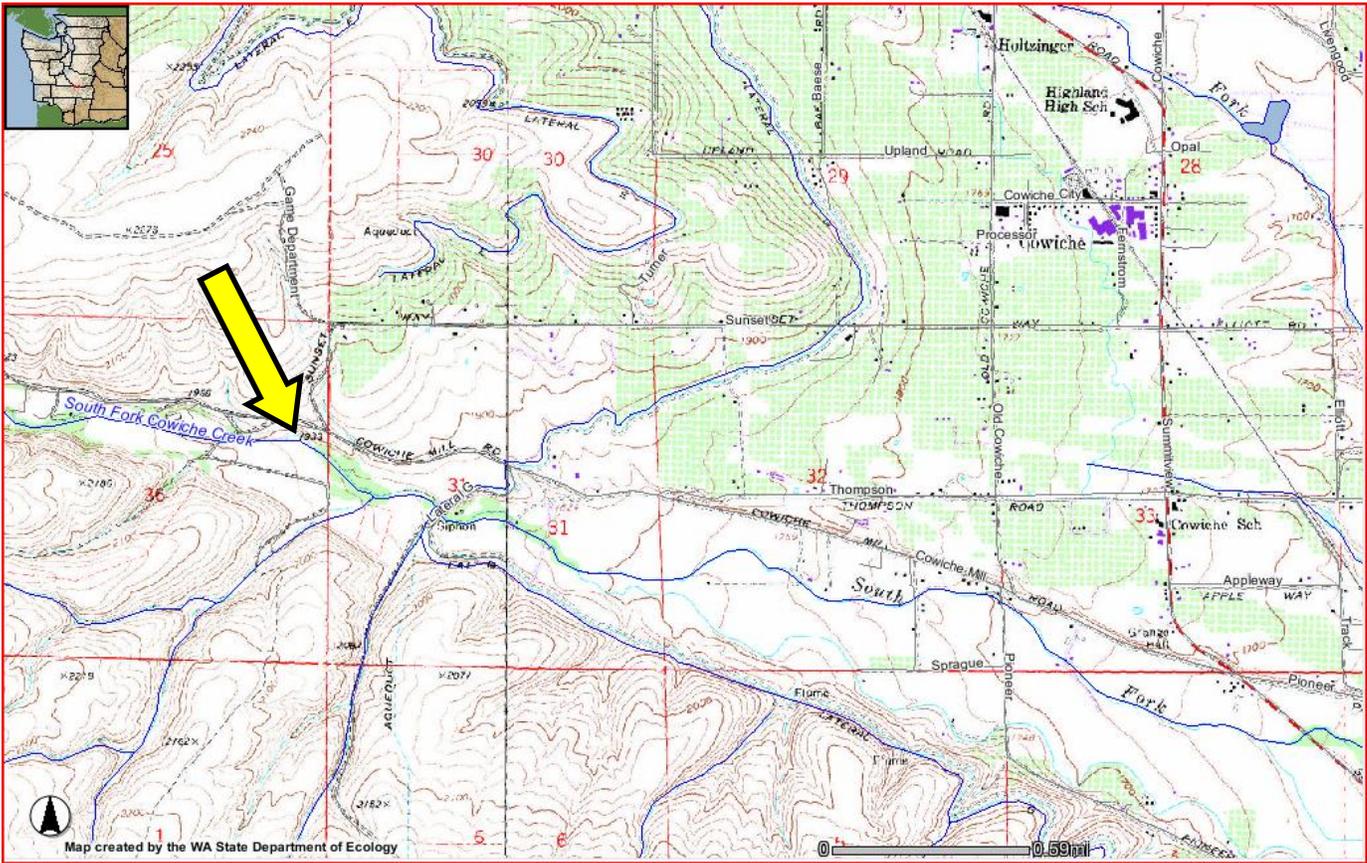


Figure 1. The project area is identified by the yellow arrow in this map.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

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

**Screen site is flat (in floodplain), but is immediately adjacent to a steep slope at the valley's edge.**

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?  
**Slope is about 20%--it will not be disturbed, but is the primary pedestrian access to the site.**

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.

**Yakima silt loam, Logy cobbly silt loam**

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.  
**No, the floodplain is well vegetated and the steep slope appears stable.**

e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.  
**The area where the screen and bypass will be placed will need to be excavated and pea gravels will bed each new structure. Native material will be used to backfill around the structures and return the area of disturbance to the existing grade.**

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

**Minimal vegetation will be cleared to complete construction of this project. The healthy riparian vegetation helps stabilize the surrounding soils, minimizing soil erosion in this site. Work will occur during low flow conditions at a time of year where rainstorms are rare, reducing the risk of runoff entering the creek. Areas of excavation will be isolated as much as possible to reduce the risks of erosion.**

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

**The screen area is about 15' x 10', but not all of this footprint will be impervious.**

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

**Work will occur during low flow conditions during a normally dry time of year. Disturbance to vegetation will be minimized as much as possible, with minimal grubbing. Areas of excavation will be kept to the absolute smallest footprint possible and sediment trapping measures will be applied as necessary to prevent runoff from entering South Fork Cowiche Creek. All disturbed areas will be replanted with suitable native vegetation and mulched to provide short term erosion control.**

## **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.

**There will be emissions from equipment and vehicles accessing the project site during project implementation as well as dust associated with construction.**

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:

**Vehicles and equipment will be kept in good working order and turned off when not in use. Upon completion of this project, there will be no additional emissions to the air associated with this project.**

## **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.

**Yes, this diversion is located on South Fork Cowiche Creek; a tributary to Cowiche Creek and the Naches River in the Yakima River Basin.**

- 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, all work will occur within 200' of South Fork Cowiche Creek.**

- 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.

**Approximately 1 cubic yard of streambank will be disturbed during installation of the fish bypass pipe from the screen, back to the creek. About 30 cubic yards of material will be excavated for screen placement and bypass construction. Pea gravel will bed the screen and pipe; otherwise, native material will be used to backfill around the structures. Excess spoils will be spread evenly and used to supplement planting areas to provide suitable soils for native vegetation.**

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

**There are no new withdrawals proposed with this project. The fish screen and meter will be installed for the existing adjudicated water rights for the Cowychee Ditch Company.**

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

**Yes, the entire project is within the 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—if necessary, water may be pumped out of the existing headgate and excavated area for the screen. Discharge from this water will flow overland such that turbid water does not enter South Fork Cowiche Creek.**

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.

**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.

**Accidental spills of petroleum products during construction are the only potential discharges anticipated that would impact ground water. However, spill prevention techniques, containment of accidental spills, and other best management practices will reduce the risk of ground and surface water contamination.**

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.

**Precipitation during implementation would be the main source of stormwater runoff. Disturbance will be minimized and best management practices for stormwater will be implemented so most runoff will be able to dissipate over land, prior to turbid water entering South Fork Cowiche Creek. Native plants will be planted in all of the disturbed areas and mulched to prevent short term impacts associated with runoff.**

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

**During construction, accidental spills of materials and fuels are a possibility. However, spill prevention techniques, containment of accidental spills, and other best management practices will reduce the risk of ground and surface water contamination.**

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

**Work will occur during the normally dry summer months, when flows are low in the creeks. This will reduce the chances that a storm event will increase stormwater that may ultimately flow into the surface waters. Best management practices will be applied throughout construction to minimize disturbance and turbidity caused by runoff.**

4. **Plants**

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

X \_\_\_\_\_ deciduous tree: **alder**, maple, **aspen**, other: **cottonwood, oak**

X \_\_\_\_\_ evergreen tree: fir, cedar, **pine**, other

X \_\_\_\_\_ **shrubs**

\_\_\_\_\_ grass

\_\_\_\_\_ pasture

\_\_\_\_\_ crop or grain

\_\_\_\_\_ wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

\_\_\_\_\_ water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

X \_\_\_\_\_ **other types of vegetation: floodplain**

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

**All disturbances will be minimized as much as possible. Every effort will be made to avoid removal of woody vegetation greater than 4" in diameter and grubbing will only occur when absolutely necessary. Existing shrubs will be driven over and/or cut low to the ground such that the roots remain to provide soil stability.**

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

**Ute Ladies'-tresses are listed in Yakima County, but none are known to occur in the County or within the Cowiche Watershed.**

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

**The existing vegetation is robust, but suitable native vegetation will be planted in all disturbed areas; using locally adapted plants and cuttings as much as possible. Native grasses and/or certified weed free mulch may be used to provide short term erosion control while the native woody vegetation becomes established.**

## 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:**

mammals: **deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:**

fish: bass, **salmon, trout**, herring, shellfish, **other:**

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

**Middle Columbia River Steelhead**

**Columbia River Bull Trout**

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

**Yes, anadromous and resident fish migrate through this reach of South Fork Cowiche Creek as adults and juveniles. The riparian corridor provides habitat for numerous bird species, including migratory song birds. The surrounding property is an important winter range for elk.**

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

**The fish screen will prevent the entrainment of fish and other aquatic organisms into the irrigation diversion. Steelhead spawning occurs in this reach of the creek so it is imperative that this screen is installed to protect fry as they emerge from the gravels. The project will occur early enough in the season so as not to disturb overwintering and stressed elk.**

## 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.

**Not applicable**

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

**No, not applicable**

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:

**Not applicable**

## **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.

**The use of petroleum based fuels and lubricants may be used for equipment operation during construction. Accidental spills and/or ignition of these materials are a possibility. Using best management practices will reduce risks associated with project implementation.**

1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

**If there were a chemical spill, the Washington Department of Ecology might need to respond. The Yakima County Sheriff's Department and/or fire districts would need to respond to any emergencies that might occur on site during implementation.**

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

**Safety practices required by federal, state, and local regulations will apply to all construction activities.**

## **b. Noise**

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

**There is minimal traffic noise from Cowiche Mill Road nearby, but none will affect the project.**

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.

**During implementation noise will be created by excavators, trucks, and pumps. All work will occur during daylight hours and normal business days. There will be no long term changes in noise at this site upon installation.**

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

**All work will be completed within two weeks, during a time of year when most sensitive birds have left their nests and prior to the high stress time for elk who depend on these lowland areas for winter range. The project will be implemented as quickly as possible and will occur before hunting season.**

## **8. Land and shoreline use**

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

**The land the point of diversion is located on is within the Cowiche Unit of WDFW's Oak Creek Wildlife Area. This property is managed to provide fish and wildlife habitat, specifically elk winter range. The property immediately downstream is owned by Cowiche Canyon Conservancy and it is open to the public and managed as a natural area; focusing on recreational opportunities within the native landscape. Agricultural lands and rural residences are nearby as well.**

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

**Prior to WDFW's purchase of the property, the pasture on the right bank of the creek was in irrigated hay production.**

c. Describe any structures on the site.

**A concrete sill is present within the stream channel, but it is degraded and does not create a fish passage barrier. There is an existing concrete headbox with a wooden head gate to form the head of the Cowychee Ditch. The ditch is piped underground until it daylight outside the proposed project area, on the adjacent landowner's property.**

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

**No structures will be demolished, but the existing headbox and headgate will be upgraded such that the Cowychee Ditch Company will be able to better manage their diversion.**

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

**Remote/Extremely Limited Development Potential**

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

**Rural Remote/Limited Development**

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

**Conservancy**

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

**This project area, within the floodplain and near the active channel of South Fork Cowiche Creek is a sensitive area, providing important habitat for numerous native fish and wildlife species. The healthy riparian buffer and beaver activity help to improve water quality as well.**

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

**None; the Cowychee Ditch Company will be responsible for continuing the routine operation and maintenance at the site; using hand tools only.**

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

**None, not applicable**

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

**None, not applicable**

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

**The project sponsors and irrigators have been working directly with WDFW during all phases of project planning. Surrounding property owners have also been engaged in the project planning process. The project has been planned, designed, and funded to improve fish habitat.**

## 9. Housing

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

**None, not applicable**

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

**None, not applicable**

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

**None, not applicable**

**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?

**The tallest structure is not likely to exceed 4' above the ground surface and will be a cage to prevent debris from jamming the new fish screen.**

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

**Riparian vegetation that is disturbed during implementation will be replanted upon completion.**

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

**The project footprint will be minimized as much as possible to limit the overall disturbance.**

**11. Light and glare**

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

**During direct sunlight, there may be some glare produced from the fish screen structure. It will be mainly shaded by surrounding riparian vegetation, so is not likely to occur.**

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

**No**

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

**Not applicable**

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

**The footprint will be minimized to the greatest extent practicable and non-reflective materials will be used when possible.**

**12. Recreation**

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

**This property is heavily used by the public for many recreational uses. Elk hunting in the fall is a main attraction.**

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

**This project is planned to occur and be completed prior to elk hunting season. Other recreational users would not be allowed into the actual construction site for safety concerns.**

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

**Construction will not occur during elk hunting seasons. Work will occur during normal business days and during working hours such that weekend and evening recreational users are not impacted by construction.**

**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**

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

**The ditch itself has limited historic significance as it is a relic of traditional farming and irrigation practices throughout the Yakima River Basin. Because it has been altered, the cultural significance is limited.**

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

**The project sponsors had a formal archaeological survey completed and completed NHPA Section 106 consultation with the Yakama Nation and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.**

#### 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.

**Cowiche Mill Road is used to access the site.**

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

**No, the City of Yakima has the nearest public transportation.**

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

**None, not applicable**

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, temporary construction access will be necessary, but existing roadways will be used as much as possible and there will be no construction or improvement of new roadways.**

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

**No, not applicable**

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

**Routine operation and maintenance of the screen by the irrigators is not likely to change.**

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

**None, not applicable**

#### 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.

**No**

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

**None, not applicable**

#### 16. Utilities

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

**None, not applicable**

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, not applicable**

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: M. TOBIN (SIGNATURE ON FILE) .....

Date Submitted: 6/10/2010.....