

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:

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:

Please complete 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. ADDITION, complete the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D). For nonproject actions.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Skagit Ditch Maintenance

2. Name of applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

600 Capitol Way N, Olympia, WA 98501: Belinda Rotton (360) 333-2131 or Chris Gourley (360) 902-8392

4. Date checklist prepared:

07/03/2013

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

Maintenance is expected to begin when permits allow. It is the hope of the agency to begin work by late August, 2013.

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

Yes. As maintenance is needed for dredging of agricultural ditches, it may be conducted if permitting is current.

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

None at this time.

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 are known at this time.

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

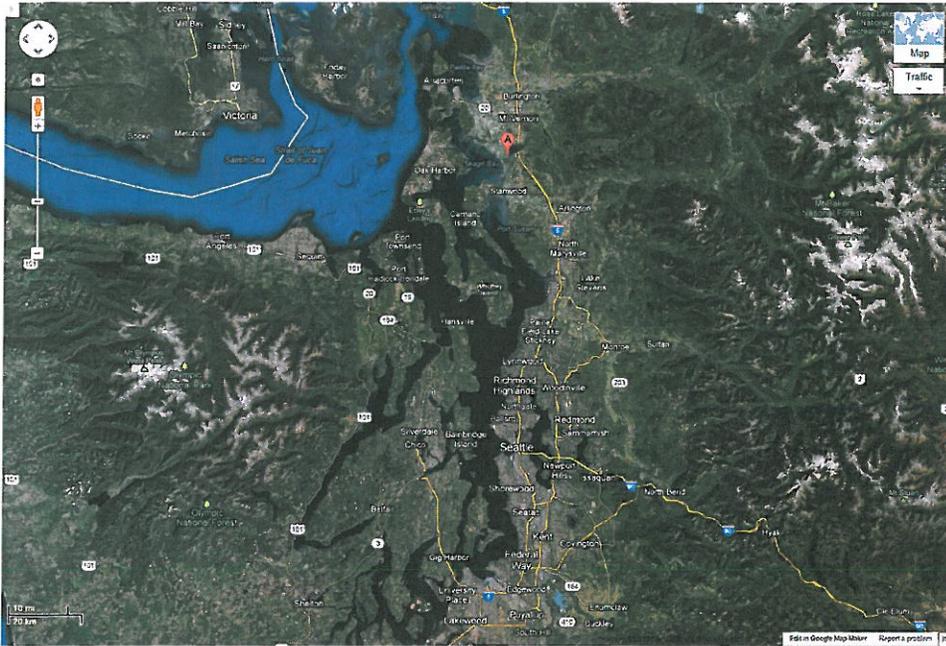
A US Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit, a WDFW HPA Permit, and Skagit County Permits as required will be needed.

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 includes the maintenance dredging of various agricultural ditches on the Island Unit of Fir Island. Some areas will require removal of vegetation only (clearing and grubbing) while other areas will require removal of sediment which is causing flooding in nearby fields. Beaver materials will also be cleared out of ditches with heavy equipment to discourage sediment trapping. See the attached maps for locations of beaver dam removal and general ditch cleaning activities.

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, and county 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 Skagit Wildlife Area headquarters office is located at 21961 Wylie Road, Mount Vernon. Take I-5 to Exit 221. Go west from the freeway to Fir Island Road, following the signs for Conway/La Conner. In 1.8 miles, turn left onto Wiley Road and follow for 1 mile to a T intersection and a WDFW sign. Turn right into the parking lot. The site location is just upstream from this parking area. It is located in Township 33N, Range 3E, Section 26 and the parcel number is 16120. For maps of the work area, please see attachments.



B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

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

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?
**Ground slopes in this area are typically less than 5%. However, dikes and agricultural
 ditches may have short slopes of up to 50%.**

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.

The soils in this area are predominantly Tacoma silt loam. Nearby areas are composed of other silt and sandy loams. The Tacoma silt loam is typically found on delta plains and is from parent materials of alluvium and volcanic ash with thin lenses of unspecified organic material. This very poorly drained soil is found on 0-2% slopes.

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.

There will not be any filling at the project location. Some ditches will be dredged with an excavator, with spoils dumped adjacent to the ditches.

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

Yes, erosion could occur. Some vegetation and beaver structures will be removed in order to reduce sediment trapping. Any erosion from sediment removal will be minimal due to low flow conditions soon after dredging and vegetation removal. The spoils will be distributed into fields when conditions allow.

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

There will be no change in impervious surface.

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

Staging and refueling of machines will be conducted out of the OHW with non-toxic lubricants.

All work will be done in accordance with the terms and conditions of required permits.

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.

Vehicle exhaust and dust from dredging is expected. No long-term change in emissions is expected from the completed project.

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 construction vehicles.

3. Water

a. Surface Water:

- 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.

The ditches to be maintained are agricultural ditches. No work will be done within 300 feet of any tide gate. Nearby streams include those that form the Skagit Delta. The general area includes many estuaries and wetlands that have not been formally delineated for the project.

- 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.

The work will all take place in agricultural ditches at least 300 feet from tide gates.

- 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.

Dredge materials are estimated based on approximately 30,350 linear feet of ditches. Approximately ¼ of that amount will only receive maintenance clearing of vegetation and beaver structure removal (750 cubic yards). Approximately ¾ of the ditches are estimated at 5 feet wide with 18" of sediment depth required for removal. This is approximately 3,000 cubic yards of dredge material that will be removed from the ditches.

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

No surface waters will be withdrawn or diverted for the work to take place.

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

Yes. The proposal is within zone A7 on the FIRM Map Panel 5301510425C.

- 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. Any wastes will be contained within the upland areas and removed by the end of maintenance.

b. Ground Water:

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

No ground water will be withdrawn and no water will be discharged to ground.

- 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.

Not Applicable.

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.

Storm water will not be not changed or affected in any way.

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

There will not be any new sources of waste materials, so they are not expected to enter any waters.

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

Staging and refueling of machines will be conducted out of the OHW with non-toxic lubricants.

All work will be done in accordance with the terms and conditions of required permits.

4. Plants

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

deciduous tree: **alder**, maple, aspen, other:

evergreen tree: fir, **cedar**, pine, **spruce**, other

shrubs

grass

pasture

crop or grain

wet soil plants: **cattail**, **buttercup**, **rush**, 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?

Some clearing and grubbing will take place in some of ditches. This will consist primarily of emergent vegetation such as cattails and reed canary grass. Other vegetation may be removed to clear ditches of obstructions.

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

The Natural Heritage Program (NHP) databases as well as the federal agency listings (USFWS) were examined for threatened or endangered plants on January 17, 2013.

Threatened plants listed in Skagit County include the following: *Impatiens noli-tangere* (western jewel-weed), *Lobelia dortmanna* (water lobelia), *Loiseleuria procumbens* (Alpine azalea), *Meconella oregano* (white meconella), and *Ranunculus californicus* (California buttercup).

The only endangered plant listed is *Castilleja levisecta* (golden paintbrush). Of all the listed threatened species, none prefer a lowland estuarine environment. It is unlikely

that they would be present at the project site. Golden paintbrushes are found in open grasslands and the proposed work area would not be ideal habitat.

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

There will not be any enhancement of vegetation on the site.

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: **various waterfowl and shorebirds**

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.

Northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), brown pelican (*pelecanus occidentalis*), Oregon spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*), Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), and North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*) are all listed as threatened species by US Fish and Wildlife in Skagit County.

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

Many migratory bird species use this area as part of a migration route along the Pacific Flyway. Many birds use the fields in this area for feeding along migration routes.

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

To preserve fish and wildlife resources, WDFW will time this project to have minimal impact upon wildlife per permit requirements.

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.

None.

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

No.

- 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.

None.

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

None.

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

Avoid use of toxic chemicals and materials.

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.

Increased levels of noise during maintenance activities are expected from this project.

Hours of increased noise levels will be 7am to 6pm.

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

No special noise reduction efforts are planned.

8. Land and shoreline use

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

The area is used for walk-in waterfowl and pheasant hunting, fishing, bird dog training, bird watching, walking, and jogging.

Adjacent properties are used for agriculture.

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

The site was purchased using federal Pittman-Robertson funds for waterfowl hunting and growing waterfowl forage grains in 1948. Management has since shifted to also restoring estuary habitat for Chinook salmon. 100 acres are planted annually with cereal grains (corn, pasture grasses, and/or barley) by local farmers under sharecrop leases or by staff. The immediate area of the project has been used for this purpose.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

The only structures are dikes, ditches, and tide gates.

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

No structures will be demolished.

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

Public Open Space of Regional/Statewide Importance

Agricultural-Natural Resource Lands

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

Open Space of Regional/Statewide Importance

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

Conservancy Shoreline

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

The work area has regular concentrations of waterfowl, according to the WDFW PHS system. There are also nearby wetlands and estuarine zones listed on PHS. Some of the work may take place near a wetland.

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:

None.

9. Housing

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

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?

There are no proposed structures.

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

None.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:
None.

11. Light and glare

- 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?
No.
- 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

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?
The area is used for walking, jogging, hunting, bird dog training, dog walking, and bird watching.
- 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:
No impacts on recreation will occur during maintenance.

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.
The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation show there are no known sites near the project site (WISAARD access 07/03/13)
- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.
Not Applicable.
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:
Keep project within the proposed existing footprint.

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.
Public streets do not serve the site itself, but the access parking lot can be reached with the directions listed above.
- b. Is site currently served by public transit? If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?
The site is not served by public transit. The nearest stop is approximately 5.4 miles away at the South Mount Vernon Park and Ride on Old Hwy 99 and E Hickox Road in Mount Vernon, WA.
- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?
No parking spots will be added.
- 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.
No.
- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.
None.
- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:
None.

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.

16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: **No utilities exist at the proposed site.** electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other _____

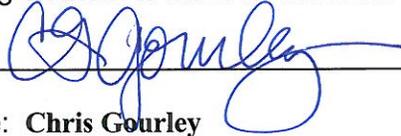
- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

None.

C. SIGNATURE

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: _____



Name of signee: **Chris Gourley**

Position and Agency/Organization: **Biologist, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Date Submitted: **July 3, 2013**

Appendix A Project Narrative