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: Welts Property Wetland Restoration

2. Name of applicant: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

   Contact: Loren Brokaw
   16018 Mill Creek Blvd, Mill Creek, WA 98012
   (425)775-1311 ext 105

4. Date checklist prepared: 9/24/13

5. Agency requesting checklist: WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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

   Phase 1: Site Prep/Earth Moving/Parking Area – Start Date: May, 2014 – End Date: Oct, 2014
   Phase 2: Native Planting – Start Date: October, 2014 – End Date: May, 2017
   Phase 3: Moist Soil Management Area – Start Date: Nov, 2015 – End Date: Nov, 2016

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

   Not at this time.

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

   A JARPA Form, wetland report, and cultural resources review have been completed for the project.

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.

   This project is the only known proposal directly affecting the subject properties.

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

   Skagit County Filling/Grading permit, Skagit County Shoreline Exemption, Skagit County Special Use permit, Skagit County Access permit, Lot of Record Certification, Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit – NWP 27, WA Dept of Ecology Section 401 Water Quality Certification, National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Review (complete).

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 primary goals of the project are to diversify wetland habitat and restore natural functions to benefit wildlife. The project involves creating depressions, swales, basins, and mounds in a 103.9 acre flat field, planting native plants, installing habitat log structures, removing drain tiles, creating a moist soil management area for wildlife, and using spoils to create a parking area and pad for a portable toilet. The project area is adjacent to the Samish River and is separated from the river by a dike, which is managed by the local diking district. The dike will not be altered as part of this project.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) owns an easement on 3 of the 4 subject properties that requires restoration work to be completed. A 0.7 acre parking area.is proposed to be constructed on the property without the NRCS easement. The project area is currently not heavily used for recreation, as there are no formal trails or parking area. The project property is currently used by waterfowl hunters and wildlife viewers. The Samish River and dikes adjacent to the project area, which will not be altered by the project, are heavily used by anglers fishing for Chinook salmon in late summer and early fall.

Deleveling, drain tile removal, swale/basin excavation, habitat log installation, and parking area/toilet pad installation will occur as the first major project phase. These tasks will be completed with heavy earth-moving equipment, potentially including excavators, front end loaders, bulldozers, and dump trucks. All spoils will remain on site to create planting mounds (not to exceed 18" in height) and to provide the base for the parking area. The parking area will be connected to Bay View-Edison Road with a driveway and underlying culvert. Swales/basins will be excavated to a depth so that they contain semi-permanent water. Approximately ten habitat logs will be placed in the swales/basins. BMPs will be installed per the temporary erosion and sediment control plan in the design plans, including seeding exposed soils following construction and installation of silt fences at the interface of exposed soils and drainage ditches.

Planting areas will be prepared by removing invasive plant species (primarily blackberries) and possibly disking land for establishment of desirable herbaceous species. Initial planting will occur in the first planting season following earth moving activities in Phase 1. Plants will be protected from herbivory with plant protectors. Monitoring, maintenance, and re-establishment will be undertaken for 2 consecutive years following planting. After the project maintenance period, invasive vegetation will continue to be monitored and managed as part of the Skagit Wildlife Area.

Farm equipment will be used to create the 'Moist Soil Management Area' shown in the design plans. This area will be mowed and disked to create conditions favorable to desired crops. A water control structure may be installed to control the hydrology of this area. The area will be monitored after initial construction to determine whether or not the water control structure is necessary.

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.

Project is located in the Samish River Unit (commonly referred to as the Welts Unit), which is part of WDFW's Skagit Wildlife Area.

No street address, located immediately SE of the intersection of Bay View-Edison Road and Bent Needle Lane.

48.55164 N lat. / -122.46074 W long.

Section:05 Township:35 Range:03

Skagit County, approximately 1 mile SW of Edison, WA.

See attached legal descriptions and vicinity map for additional location information.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. **Earth**

a. General description of the site (circle one): **Flat**, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other . . . . . The project area is a flat field protected from inundation by the Samish River with dikes.

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?
5%

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 NRCS online web soil survey indicates the soils in the project area are a combination of Skagit silt loam and drained Tacoma silt loam.

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

No, soils in the project area appear to be stable.

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

No fill will be imported to the site, aside from a gravel cap for the parking area. Approximately 20,158 cubic yards of material will be excavated and piled in strategic locations onsite to create planting mounds (not to exceed 18" in height) and to provide the base for the parking area. Swales will be excavated to a depth so that they contain semi-permanent water. The purpose of the grading/filling is to diversify wetland habitats for wildlife and to create a parking lot that will improve public access and safety.

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

If left untreated, erosion would be possible in the newly excavated areas. A temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) plan will be implemented to reduce this chance. The TESC plan includes installing silt fence at the interface of disturbed areas and drainage ditches. Disturbed areas will be seeded (approximately 12.9 acres) and vegetated to eliminate this chance long-term.

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

0.7% of the site will be the new parking area, which will have a gravel surface.

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

A temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) plan will be implemented to control erosion during and immediately following construction. This plan is fully described in the design plans and includes (but not limited to): installation of temporary BMPs, construction of a temporary access road, setting clearing limits, and pollutant control. NRCS staff will regularly inspect compliance of the TESC plan during construction.

All disturbed areas will be vegetated and/or seeded following construction to provide long-term stability (12.9 acres).

a. **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.

The project is not expected to have an impact to the air after project completion.

During construction, equipment used to complete the work will emit gases associated with burning fossil fuels. A very rough estimate of 500 gallons of diesel and 100 gallons of gasoline will be burned to run equipment. Due to the wet nature of the site, dust is unlikely, however it will be monitored by NRCS staff during construction so that it does not create a problem.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

No, there are no off-site sources of emissions anticipated.

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

Hauling of spoils and associated fuels burned by dump trucks will be minimized by keeping spoils on site.

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.

The Samish River is East of the project area and is separated from the project by a dike. Drainage ditches border the site and drain primarily to Alice Bay, which is Northwest of the project area. In flood conditions, surface water drains to the Northeast corner of the project area through a floodgate.

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 project does not require any work in or on the waterward side of the dike adjacent to the Samish River. A culvert will be installed in the drainage ditch along Bayview-Edison Road to accommodate a driveway that leads to the parking area.

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 20,158 cubic yards of material will be excavated and piled on site in strategic locations to diversify wetland habitat and create a parking area. No excavation or filling will occur in surface water bodies. The area that filling and excavating will take place is prior converted wetland that is currently drained with drain tiles that lead to ditches. No less than 150' of each drain tile line will be removed and topography will be altered to diversify habitat. No fill will be imported from offsite, aside from the gravel cap proposed for the parking area.

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

Yes, a water control structure may be added that will divert water from the ditches into the moist soil management area. The purpose of the structure is to have the ability to adjust hydrology so that conditions in the moist soil management area are ideal for growing vegetation attractive to wildlife. After excavation activities in Phase 1 are completed, the area will be monitored to determine whether or not the water control structure is necessary. If unnecessary, the structure will not be added.

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

Yes, the entire project area lies within the 100-year floodplain of the Samish River.

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

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 groundwater will be withdrawn from the project area. The proposed removal of drain tiles connected to ditches is expected to raise the water table in the project area and create additional flood storage.

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.

Does not apply.

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.

Water runoff is expected to be less connected to adjacent drainage ditches than pre-project conditions due to removal of drain tiles. Runoff is expected to collect in excavated swales and semi-permanent ponds on site before either evaporating, the water table drops below grade, or entering the existing ditches.

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

During construction there is a highly unlikely chance of an accidental fuel or oil spill due to the operation of heavy equipment.

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

The project is designed to increase the ability of the site to retain water. This is expected to have positive impacts on surface, ground, and runoff water quality and quantity long-term. During construction, fuel, oil, and other toxic chemicals will be stored away from waterbodies and equipment will be checked regularly for leaks.

4. **Plants**

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

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

——— evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other

——— **shrubs**

——— **grass**

——— **pasture**

——— crop or grain

——— **wet soil plants:** cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other

——— water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other

——— other types of vegetation: **non-native invasive**

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

To entire site (103.9 acres) will be mowed prior to construction, reducing the height of grasses and invasive plants so that work can more easily be completed. After excavation is completed in Phase 1, the site will be planted with native wetland plants and the site will be managed to encourage their establishment while selectively removing non-native invasive plants.

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

No threatened or endangered plant species are known to be on or near the site.

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

Native plants will be planted on the site, protected with plant protectors, and maintained to encourage survivorship.

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.

Puget Sound Chinook salmon, Puget Sound steelhead and bull trout are near the project site in the Samish River. The river is separated from the project site by a dike.

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

The area is part of the Pacific Flyway for migratory birds. The adjacent Samish River is a migratory route for anadromous fish.

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

The purpose of the project is to diversify and improve wetland habitat for wildlife. Altering topography to create semi-permanent basins and swales, removing drain tiles, and creating planting mounds are all expected to benefit 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.

Not applicable.

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.

During construction there is a highly unlikely chance of an accidental fuel or oil spill due to the operation of heavy equipment.

1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

None

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

During construction, fuel, oil, and other toxic chemicals will be stored away from waterbodies and equipment will be checked regularly for leaks.

b. **Noise**

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

No existing noise in the area is expected to 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.

No change to noise levels on a long-term basis is expected. During construction, heavy equipment will be operated during typical business hours. Equipment expected to be used includes: excavators, skid steers, front-end loaders, mowing equipment, and dump trucks.

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

Noise related to construction will be limited to normal business hours.

8. **Land and shoreline use**

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

The property is owned and managed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife as the part of the Skagit Wildlife Area. The project property is used primarily by waterfowl hunters and wildlife viewers. There is a permanent wetland reserve easement on the property owned by the United States Department of Agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This easement requires hydrologic and native vegetation restoration.

The dike immediately to the east of the project properties is heavily used by recreational anglers in the late summer/early fall fishing for Chinook salmon. Public access to the dike is controlled by the local dike district. This restoration project is not expected to impact accessibility to the dike, aside from providing a parking lot (as an alternative to parking on the road shoulder) that will likely be used by fishermen and is expected to improve safety. A portable toilet installed as part of this project near the fishing site will also likely be used by fishermen and is intended to alleviate some of the conflicts between neighboring landowners and fishermen on the adjacent dikes and Samish River.

Adjacent properties to the east, west, and south are agricultural and open space. There are four private residences on the northern border of the project area. The residences are separated from the project area by Bayview Edison Road.

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

The site has historically been used for agriculture. The site reportedly was not actively farmed for several years prior to purchase by WDFW and NRCS due to unproductive soils.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

There are no structures on the site.

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

No structures will be demolished.

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

The site is currently zoned as Agricultural.

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

Agricultural-Natural Resource Lands.

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

Rural

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

No

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

No people will reside or have a permanent work station in the project area.

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

Zero

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

No displacement impacts are anticipated.

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

The proposal fulfills the land use plan for the project area, as the project is required for WDFW to meet its commitment to the easement owned by NRCS.

9. **Housing**

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

0

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

0

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

N/A

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?

No structures proposed – the parking area is proposed to be at an elevation similar to Bayview-Edison Road, approximately 8.5 feet higher than the elevation of the bottom of the drainage ditch.

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

No views are expected to be altered.

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

Replacement of invasive plants with native plants is expected to improve aesthetics from existing conditions.

11. **Light and glare**

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

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

No light or glare are expected to impact the project.

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

N/A

12. **Recreation**

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

The adjacent Samish River is a popular fishing site for Chinook salmon in the late summer/early fall and is accessed via the dikes managed by the local diking district (not to be affected by the project). The project property owned by WDFW is used primarily by waterfowl hunters and wildlife viewers. The greater Skagit delta area is very popular among outdoor enthusiasts, including waterfowl hunters, fishermen, and wildlife viewers/photographers.

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

No, the proposed project would improve safety for recreational users of the site through the parking area and is expected to improve conditions for wildlife.

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

Installation of a portable toilet, improving public safety through the parking area, and improving wildlife habitat on the site is expected to benefit public recreation.

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, there are no known objects listed on or proposed for preservation on or near the site. The project has been reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer in conformance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

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

There are no landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any: If objects of significance are encountered during construction, work will stop and appropriate authorities will be notified for instruction on how to proceed.

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.

Bayview-Edison Road borders the site to the North and West. Two temporary construction access roads are proposed to connect to Bay View-Edison Road that are 14'-20' wide and consist of 12"-24" deep bank run gravel laid on geotextile fabric. The temporary access roads will be removed after completion of excavation and the affected area returned to original grade.

The parking area and portable toilet pad are proposed to be connected to Bayview-Edison Road via a driveway and underlying culvert. A Skagit County Access Permit will need to be secured.

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

There is no public transit that serves the site. The nearest known transit stop is at the Alger Park and Ride, which is 10 miles away from the site.

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

The proposed parking area will hold approximately 50 cars. No parking spaces will be eliminated.

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 new roads or streets will be required as part of this project.

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

No, the project will not use water, rail, or air transportation.

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

This is largely unknown, as it depends on how popular the site will be among outdoor recreationists. Based on other similar sites in the area, an average of 50 visitors per day is a reasonable estimate. In August/September, a peak volume of fisherman use the adjacent dike property and will likely use the parking lot constructed for this project.

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

Based on the volume of predicted use, impacts to transportation in the area are expected to be negligible. If anything, providing a parking area is expected to improve the current situation in which users parallel park on the shoulder of the street.

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 use of the project area by the public and the maintenance requirement to discourage invasive plants and encourage native plants will likely increase the maintenance needs provided by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. No additional public service needs are expected to be generated by the project.

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

Maintenance of the planting area is funded by the NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program.

16. **Utilities**

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other. -- **None**

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.

No utilities are proposed as part of this project.

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

EVALUATION FOR
AGENCY USE ONLY

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: .....

Date Submitted: 10/18/13