



**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

MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (MDNS)

Name of Proposal: MDNS 14-055: INDIAN CREEK RESTORATION

Description of Proposal:

The Indian Creek watershed has been degraded from past land use including construction and management of a logging railroad in the 1920's, livestock grazing, farming, and tractor logging. The stream and associated meadows have lost the large trees and riparian shrubs that would provide roughness features during floods. As a result the stream channel has cut deeper into valley alluvium, and high flows are now trapped in the incised, flume-like channel. This project proposes to use local and transported conifers to restore channel interaction with the adjacent meadows. Approximately 1,000 trees up to 24" in diameter will be placed in complex jams in the stream and scattered randomly on the meadow to restore roughness. Ditches that route surface water to the stream will also be filled with woody material to promote groundwater recharge and to reduce flood peaks downstream of the project area. Placing complex log jams in the stream is expected to cause the channel to re-aggrade, flooding the meadows on a much more frequent basis. This technique is referred to as large wood replenishment, and is described in WDFW's "Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines" Manual. The proponent has demonstrated the efficacy of this restoration approach in other portions of the Yakima watershed, where wood replenishment has spread floodwaters across publicly-owned meadows. Side channels, stream pool frequency, riparian plants and wetland features have flourished as a result of these projects.

There is no record of any recent cultural surveys, buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers. The APE has been identified as culturally sensitive location; however there are no recorded landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation. There are no recorded reports of recent cultural surveys within Section 21; therefore there is insufficient evidence upon which to base a finding of project effects. To address this lack, the APE will be surveyed by a professional archaeologist from the Yakama Nation; the resulting report will be used to inform BPA's findings. The BPA, as the federal lead for this project, initiated Section 106 consultation with DAHP and the affected tribe(s). As a result of consultation and research conducted by a professional archaeologist, the BPA determined that insufficient evidence was available to reach a finding about the potential for the project to affect historic properties. The BPA contracted with a professional archaeologist to conduct research designed to address this lack of information. The BPA contracted with a professional archaeologist from the Yakama Nation to conduct research designed to address this lack of information. The survey is currently on-going.

The results of the survey will be used to identify appropriate measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to historic properties.

The proponent shall incorporate the following mitigation measures into the project:

Wolves

- The project will occur in early fall and will be completed in less than one month.
- The project will increase the amount of riparian habitat, improving wolf prey species.

Northern Spotted Owls

- Canopy closure will be retained at levels above 60%.
- No trees with defect will be removed.
- Harvest will be extremely light, removing only a few select individual understory trees. Dominant and co-dominant trees will be retained.

Northern Goshawks

- Timing restrictions will be adhered to.

Bull Trout

- Indian Creek will be surveyed prior to construction to ensure that Bull trout redds are not present.

Mid Columbia Steelhead

- Work window limitations will be adhered to.

Water quality

- Appropriate water quality best management practices will be implemented at the project site during harvest and wood placement.
- Areas of the project site disturbed during construction will be stabilized via placement of slash and installation of livestakes where appropriate.
- Refueling of any/all equipment will occur at a minimum of 150 feet away from the OHWM of Indian Creek.

Public Access and Recreation

- The area is open to pedestrian, bicycle and horse access. These methods for accessing the property will be retained. The existing open road will not be affected by this project.

Historic and Cultural Preservation

- A Cultural and Archaeological survey will be completed by a professional archaeologist. All documented sites will be protected with a 10 meter buffer.

Proponent/Applicant:

Primary:

Scott Nicolai, Habitat Biologist
Yakama Nation
201 North Pearl Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
(509) 962-6142
ykfphabitat@fairpoint.net

Secondary:

William Meyer, Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
201 North Pearl Street
Ellensburg, WA 98926
(509) 899-2587
William.Meyer@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Proposal: The project is in Kittitas County in central Washington State. Indian Creek is a left bank tributary to the North Fork (NF) of the Teanaway River, and is within Township 21N, Range 16E, Section 16 WM.

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 law¹ does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this mitigated determination of nonsignificance (MDNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this MDNS according to state rules.² We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the MDNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or MDNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on August 22, 2014**.

Method of Comment:

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Steven Bell, back-up for Lisa Wood

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://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>. 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.¹

If you have questions about this MDNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: August 7, 2014

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 14-055. mdns