

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

UPDATED 2014

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:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. 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:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the [SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS \(part D\)](#). Please completely answer 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. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Delisting of Steller Sea Lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) as a state threatened species.

2. Name of applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

Penny Becker, Listing and Recovery Section Manager
Diversity Division, Wildlife Program
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98502
Tel: 360-902-2694

4. Date checklist prepared:

January 8, 2015

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

Rule action by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission on March 20-21, 2015.

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

No other actions are related to this proposal.

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

Draft and final periodic status reviews were prepared and provide the rationale for delisting Steller Sea Lions under Washington law. The draft periodic status review was available for a 3-month public review (September 12 – December 11, 2014) and the final periodic status review for 14 days (January 9-23, 2015). A copy of the final periodic status review, which is titled *Washington State Periodic Status Review for the Steller Sea Lion*, is submitted with this checklist.

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.

No other actions are pending that are related to this proposal.

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

This rulemaking action must be approved by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission.

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 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has evaluated the population status of the Steller Sea Lion, which is currently a state threatened species. One rule is proposed to be amended: WAC 232-12-011. WAC 232-12-011 identifies threatened species in Washington that are at risk of becoming endangered in the state and are in need of recovery actions to restore populations to healthy levels. The rule also identifies species listed as sensitive and species classified as protected wildlife.

Pursuant to WAC 232-12-297(6.1.1) and (6.2), WDFW is proposing to amend WAC 232-12-011 and is requesting that the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt the Department's recommendation to delist Steller Sea Lions as a state threatened species. Rationale for this action are presented in the *Washington State Periodic Status Review for the Steller Sea Lion*. The report provides an analysis of the factors cited in WAC 232-12-297(7.1.1) through (7.1.5) and considers all information relevant to the status of the species in Washington as well as in the entire eastern Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of Steller Sea Lions, which ranges from Southeast Alaska to California. As described in the report, Steller Sea Lions have demonstrated average annual population growth rates (for adults and juveniles combined) of 9.13% in Washington from 1989 to 2013 and 2.99% in the entire eastern DPS from 1979 to 2010. Adult and juvenile Steller sea lions recorded during summer trend counts in Washington increased from 289 animals in 1991 to 2,157 animals in 2014. Additional population recovery in Washington is demonstrated by the fact that although pupping did not occur in the state during most of the 20th century, small but increasing numbers of pups have been born at several sites since 1992, with the total growing to 60 pups in 2014. The report also discusses a number of known or potential human-related factors that could be adversely affecting the eastern DPS, including climate change, reduced prey abundance through competition with fisheries, human disturbance, incidental take in fishing gear, entanglement in marine debris, intentional killing, environmental contaminants, oil spills, diseases and parasites, and harmful algal blooms. None of these factors, however, has prevented the successful recovery of Steller sea lions in Washington or in the eastern DPS during the past few decades. Based on all of these considerations, it seems likely that Steller sea lion numbers in Washington will continue to increase until reaching carrying capacity with prey resources at some unknown point in the future.

Draft versions of the *Washington State Periodic Status Review for the Steller Sea Lion* were evaluated by the scientific community, including both WDFW scientists and external scientists. Members of the public were also invited to review the draft periodic status review during a public comment period that extended from September 12 to December 11, 2014. After the close of the public review period, the Department prepared the final periodic status review and delisting recommendation. The public will have an opportunity to review the final periodic status review, delisting recommendation, and SEPA findings from January 9-23, 2015. The final listing recommendation is planned to be presented to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission on February 6-7, 2015 and the Commission is expected to take action on the recommendation on March 20-21, 2015.

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.

The range of Steller Sea Lions in Washington includes all marine waters, coastlines, estuaries, and the mainstem Columbia River upstream to Bonneville Dam.

B. Environmental elements

1. Earth

a. General description of the site

(circle one): Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous,
other _____

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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 agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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.

Not applicable.

- 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.

Not applicable.

- 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.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

- 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.

Not applicable.

- b. Ground Water:

- 1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities

withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Not applicable.

- 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.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

- 3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

4. Plants

a. Check the 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
- Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bulrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

Not applicable.

5. **Animals**

a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site. Examples include:

birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:

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

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

This proposal affects one species currently listed as state threatened, the Steller Sea Lion.

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

Not applicable.

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.

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.

Not applicable.

- 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

Not applicable.

- 2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.

Not applicable.

- 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

b. Noise

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

Not applicable.

- 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.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

8. Land and shoreline use

a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

Not applicable.

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

Not applicable.

1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

Not applicable.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

m. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with nearby agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

Not applicable.

9. Housing

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

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?

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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?

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

12. Recreation

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

- a. Are there any 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 located on or near the site? If so, specifically describe.

Not applicable.

- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

Not applicable.

- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

Not applicable.

14. Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

Not applicable.

- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

Not applicable.

- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

Not applicable.

- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

Not applicable.

- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

15. Public services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

16. Utilities

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

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.

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: _____



Name of signee _____

Penny A. Becker

Position and Agency/Organization _____

Listing and Recovery Manager, WDFW

Date Submitted: _____

1/9/15

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions

(IT IS NOT NECESSARY to use this sheet for project actions)

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction
with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of
activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or
at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in
general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production,
storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

This proposal will not increase discharges to waters; emissions to air; production,
storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

Not applicable.

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

This proposal does not directly affect any plants, animals, fish, or marine life other than Steller Sea Lions. There is no direct effect on the Steller Sea Lion population, as this action is consistent with achieving recovery of the species. Steller Sea Lions were listed as threatened under WAC 232-12-011 in 1993, following federal listing in 1990. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife bases its proposal to delist Steller Sea Lions on scientific information contained in its report *Washington State Periodic Status Review for the Steller Sea Lion*. This report summarizes strong evidence that Steller Sea Lion abundance in Washington has been rapidly increasing since 1989 and concludes that the species is no longer vulnerable in the state.

Several protective measures will remain in effect for Steller Sea Lions in Washington if delisting is approved. These include provisions under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and state law that prohibits hunting. The MMPA prohibits the taking (i.e., harassing, hunting, capturing, killing or collecting, or attempting to harass, hunt, capture, kill or collect) of marine mammals except as permitted or authorized under special circumstance, such as take incidental to research or commercial fishing activities; subsistence harvest by Alaska Natives; and take of marine mammals not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that are having "significant negative impacts" on ESA-listed salmonid species. Additionally, many haulout sites used by Steller Sea Lions in Washington are on national wildlife refuge lands, where human activity is restricted except by permit.

Under Washington state law (WAC 232-12-011), pinnipeds, which include Steller Sea Lions, are protected species and shall not be hunted, except that: "This section shall not apply to hair seals and sea lions which are threatening to damage or are damaging commercial fishing gear being utilized in a lawful manner or when said mammals are damaging or threatening to damage commercial fish being lawfully taken with commercial gear." This exception does not preempt the federal protections provided under the MMPA.

State delisting of Steller Sea Lions in Washington could lead to the future lethal removal of small numbers of individuals at locations where authorized by federal and state law. Any future management and control actions of Steller Sea Lions in conflict areas would be conducted under the auspices of the MMPA and state law, and would require SEPA review prior to final decision and implementation.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

Under this action, no additional protective measures are being proposed for Steller Sea Lions or other plants, animals, fish, or marine life.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

This proposal will not deplete energy or natural resources.

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

Not applicable.

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

This proposal will not affect environmentally sensitive areas or protected areas.

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

Not applicable.

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

This proposal will not affect land and shoreline use.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

Not applicable.

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

This proposal will not affect demands on transportation or public services and utilities.

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

Not applicable.

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

The proposal will not conflict with any local, state, or federal laws. The eastern DPS of Steller Sea Lion was delisted by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2013.