

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: [\[help\]](#)

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: [\[help\]](#)

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 [\[help\]](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: [\[help\]](#)
Spears Unit Mill Site Project
2. Name of applicant: [\[help\]](#)
WDFW – Cowlitz Wildlife Area
3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person: [\[help\]](#)
PO BOX 758
Morton, WA 98356
Mark Grabski 360.496.6223 or Richard Vanderlip 360.496.6263
4. Date checklist prepared: [\[help\]](#)
March 6, 2015
5. Agency requesting checklist: [\[help\]](#)
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): [\[help\]](#)
Not applicable as the timing and schedule is dependent on the availability of materials being provided by other agencies.
7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain. [\[help\]](#)
Yes. The initial project is to fill the old mill foundations and stockpile fill material. Eventually , the stockpiled material will be graded and planted with grass and shrub species.
8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal. [\[help\]](#)
None
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. [\[help\]](#)
None
10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known. [\[help\]](#)
Fill and Grade permit from Lewis county
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.) [\[help\]](#)

The Spears Unit of the Cowlitz Wildlife Area was purchased by Tacoma Power and is managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide recreational opportunities and mitigation for the habitat losses due to the inundation caused by the hydroelectric project on the Cowlitz River. The project consists of allowing agencies such as DOT, City of Morton and Lewis County to dispose of fill from such activities as ditch cleaning and slide debris removal on a 7 acre upland portion of the wildlife area. The area where the disposal will occur consists of upland ground, on previously disturbed soils and the soils are heavily compacted from years of equipment use and mill operations. The upland nature of the site is likely anthropogenic as the surrounding lands are much lower in elevation suggesting the site consists of fill material from the excavation of the mill pond and possibly other offsite sources. The fill material will be used to fill the interior of the mill foundations removing the hazard of injury from an accidental fall.

Additionally, the material will be graded across the compacted soils to provide a suitable surface for habitat plantings. The project is entirely within the area disturbed by previous mill operations.

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. [\[help\]](#)

The project is located on the Spears Unit of the Cowlitz Wildlife Area in East Lewis County about a mile south of the town of Randle on Highway 131.

Section 20 Township 12N Range 07E

Directions:

From southbound Interstate 5

Take exit **68** for **US-12 E** toward **Morton/Yakima**
Turn left onto **US-12 E** towards **Morton/Yakima** (48.4 miles)
Turn right at **Randle** onto **WA-131 S** (1.3 miles)

From northbound Interstate 5

Take exit **68** for **US-12 E** toward **Morton/Yakima**
Turn left onto **US-12 E** towards **Morton/Yakima** (48.4 miles)
Turn right at **Randle** onto **WA-131 S** (1.3 miles)

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS [\[help\]](#)

1. Earth

a. General description of the site [\[help\]](#)

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

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)? [\[help\]](#)

The site is on a flat grade with no slope or slopes less than 1%

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. [\[help\]](#)

The Lewis County Soil Survey reports the site being comprised of Siler sil t loam a deep well drained soil found on flood plains and low terraces. This is likely the native soil that one will find beneath the highly compacted soils created by mill operations. In addition it is obvious that crushed rock was incorporated into the surface substrate to provide a more durable surface for mill operations.

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe. [\[help\]](#)
No
- 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. [\[help\]](#)
The purpose of the fill is to remove hazards by filling old foundations and provide a soil substrate that will encourage the growth of habitat plantings. The fill will come from multiple locations in Lewis County and will be provided by other government agencies. Likely sources will be ditch and slide debris as road work occurs. The amount of fill for the entire project will be approximately 15,000 yards. However, the project is limited to what the agencies can provide.
- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe. [\[help\]](#)
Yes erosion could occur to stockpiled fill however it is unlikely as the project site has very little to no slope.
- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)? [\[help\]](#)
None
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any: [\[help\]](#)
The foundation fill will be contained within the concrete foundation walls and the fill utilized to create plantable soils will be stabilized with erosion control measures such as planting or mulching.

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. [\[help\]](#)
Dust emissions could result during times when material is being dumped on site or graded into place.
- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe. [\[help\]](#)
No
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any: [\[help\]](#)
The site will be monitored for dust emissions that impact air quality. If impacts become likely then measures to control dust such as watering the surfaces and/or stockpiles will be implemented.

3. Water

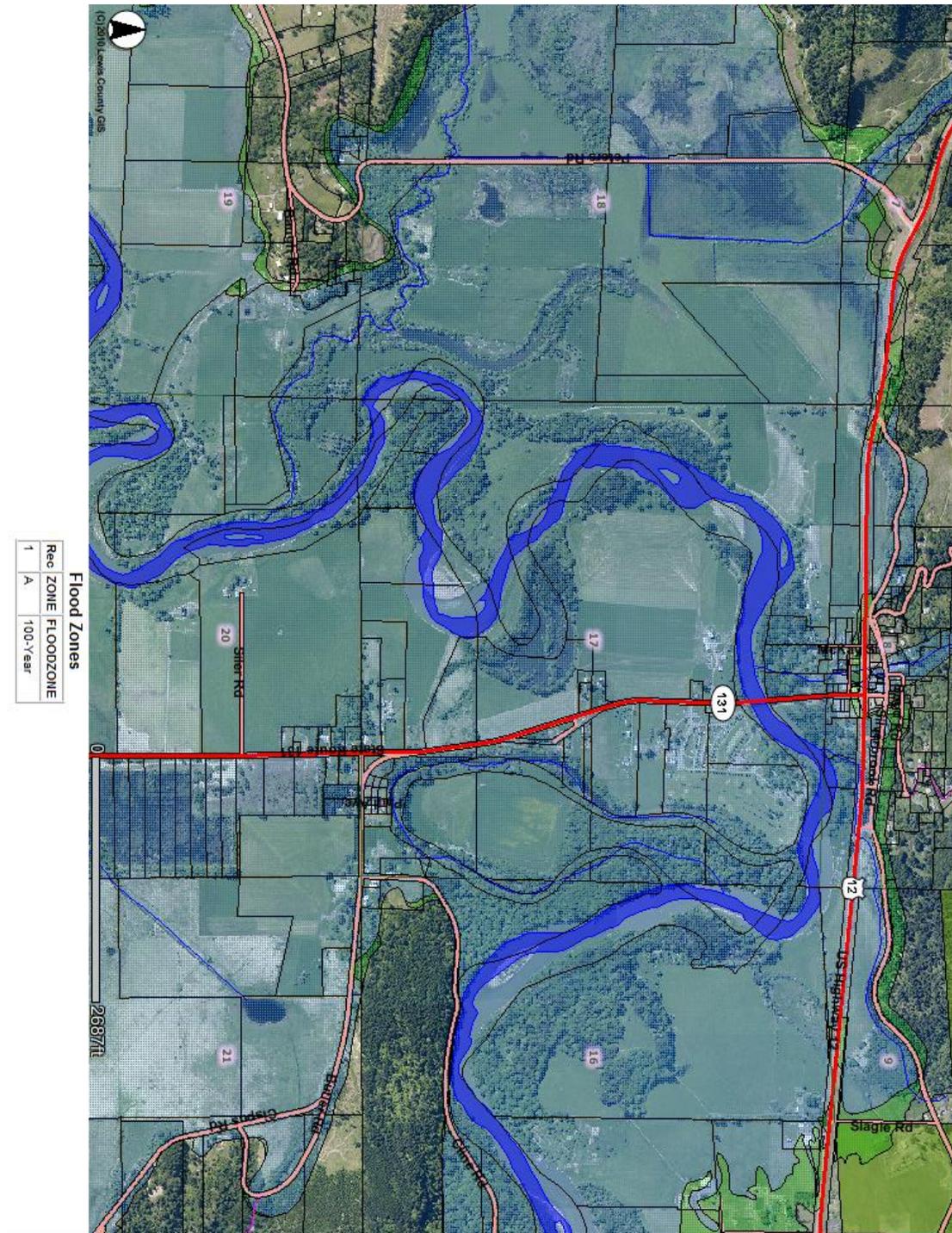
- a. Surface Water: [\[help\]](#)
- 1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into. [\[help\]](#)
There is a 27 acre mill pond in the vicinity of the project that is managed by the wildlife area for wintering waterfowl. This pond has no direct outlet though high water is controlled through the use of a standpipe that drains into Siler Creek.
 - 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. [\[help\]](#)
No
 - 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. [\[help\]](#)
None

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

No

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

Yes – the entire project lies within the 100-year floodplain. See map on next page.



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. [\[help\]](#)

No

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. [\[help\]](#)

No

2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals. . . ; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve. [\[help\]](#)

None

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. [\[help\]](#)

None

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe. [\[help\]](#)

No

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

No

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

None needed

4. **Plants** [\[help\]](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site: [\[help\]](#)

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, bullrush, 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? [\[help\]](#)

None

- c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site. [\[help\]](#)
None
- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any: [\[help\]](#)
The soils will initially be planted with naturalized grass species to prevent erosion and scour. Hardwoods and shrubs will self colonize the area as suitable ground becomes available.
- e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.
There is a population of scotch broom on the site that is actively controlled. Scotch broom on adjacent private properties makes eradication difficult.

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: [\[help\]](#)
birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other: migratory waterfowl
mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:
fish: bass, salmon, trout, other warmwater fish, eels
- b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site. [\[help\]](#)
Coho salmon and winter steelhead have been known to use Siler Creek which is south of the project but outside of the projects boundaries
- c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain. [\[help\]](#)
Yes – waterfowl on the Pacific flyway are common occurrences.
- d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any: [\[help\]](#)
The project by design will ultimately improve the suitability of the site to support habitat components such as trees and shrubs naturally enhancing the area's benefit to wildlife
- e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.
None

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. [\[help\]](#)
None
- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe. [\[help\]](#)
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: [\[help\]](#)
None Needed

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. [\[help\]](#)
No

- 1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.
None known
- 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.
None
- 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.
None
- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.
None
- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:
None Needed

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)? [\[help\]](#)
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. [\[help\]](#)
Intermittently there would be noise from construction equipment like dump trucks. Noise will occur only during daylight hours and exist only during the construction of the project.
- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)
None

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. [\[help\]](#)
The site is mitigation land for Tacoma Power's hydroelectric project on the Cowlitz River. The land is managed as a wildlife area. The proposed project will not impact/change the land use of any adjacent or nearby properties.
- 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? [\[help\]](#)
Historically the site was agricultural lands. In recent history it was a plywood mill. Conversion is not part of this projects proposal.
 - 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:
No
- c. Describe any structures on the site. [\[help\]](#)
Concrete slabs and foundation walls from the mill that no longer exists.
- d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what? [\[help\]](#)
No

- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site? [\[help\]](#)
Rural Development District – RDD-20
- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site? [\[help\]](#)
Rural
- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site? [\[help\]](#)
Not applicable
- h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify. [\[help\]](#)
No
- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project? [\[help\]](#)
None
- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace? [\[help\]](#)
None
- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)
None needed
- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any: [\[help\]](#)
None needed
- m. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with nearby agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:
None needed

9. Housing

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. [\[help\]](#)
None
- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. [\[help\]](#)
None
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)
None needed

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? [\[help\]](#)
No structures are proposed
- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed? [\[help\]](#)
None
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)
None needed

11. Light and glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur? [\[help\]](#)
None
- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views? [\[help\]](#)
No

c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal? [\[help\]](#)

None

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)

None needed

12. Recreation

a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity? [\[help\]](#)

Most if not all recreational activities associated with the outdoors can be found on or near the project.

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe. [\[help\]](#)

No

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any: [\[help\]](#)

None needed

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. [\[help\]](#)

A review of records included DAHP's database, archival maps, historic aerial photographs, and local historical accounts, and Lewis County Historical Places registry. Archival records indicate no potential for 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.

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. [\[help\]](#)

A review of records included DAHP's database, archival maps, historic aerial photographs, and local historical accounts, and Lewis County Historical Places registry. The location was surveyed in the 1980s with negative results (Fugro Northwest, Inc. 1980). Archival records indicate no landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation has been recorded in the proposed project area.

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. [\[help\]](#)

A review of records included DAHP's database, archival maps, historic aerial photographs, and local historical accounts, and Lewis County Historical Places registry. DAHP's predictive model (based on environmental factors) indicates a high likelihood that ground disturbing activity on the project landform would be likely to encounter cultural resources. As the predictive model does not account for historic or modern disturbance, a review of available archival information and land-use information was required. A site visit identified micro-topographic features indicative of an anthropogenic landscape. The surrounding topography is at least 12 feet lower in elevation (perhaps more) and the margin between the mill site and the surrounding landscape is straight and abrupt. There is a 27 acre man-made mill pond on the site and it seems likely much of the upland portion of the site was created from the spoils of the pond's creation. This review, conducted by the WDFW archaeologist, indicates that 1) the extent of previous disturbance and 2) the project design, comprised entirely of additive actions, makes it unlikely that the project as-described would encounter any unrecorded cultural resources.

Recognizing that not all information is available through written record, project review included consultation with local tribes. Any information derived from these sources will be used to inform project design.

- 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.

Project design will be informed by the final results of cultural review and tribal consultation. The project will be designed to avoid affects to cultural resources and will operate under an Inadvertent Discovery Plan.

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. [\[help\]](#)

Highway 131 is the primary access and ingress and egress already exists for this site.

- 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? [\[help\]](#)

No – there is limited public transportation available ~ 1.5 miles north in Randle, WA

- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate? [\[help\]](#)

No parking will be created or eliminated

- 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). [\[help\]](#)

No

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

No

- 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? [\[help\]](#)

None

- 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.

No

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)

None needed

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. [\[help\]](#)

No

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any. [\[help\]](#)

None needed

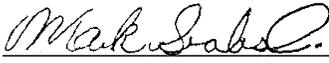
16. Utilities

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: [\[help\]](#)
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. [\[help\]](#)
None

C. Signature [\[HELP\]](#)

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 Mark Grabski

Position and Agency/Organization WDFW - Cowlitz WA Manager

Date Submitted: March 6, 2015