

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:

Rustler's Gulch Forest Restoration Project-Phase 1

2. Name of applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

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

Contact: Rod Pfeifle

Address: 1701 South 24th Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720

Phone: 509-680-3175

4. Date checklist prepared:

March 19, 2015

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

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

Phase 1, June 15, 2015-June 15, 2016 for timber harvest

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

- A. Slash Disposal: Debris from timber harvest operations (limbs, tops, etc.) will be piled and trailed at the landings in preparation for burning. Slash burning will be carried out after the timber harvest work has been completed. All slash burning will be completed as per Department of Natural Resources and Department of Ecology regulations.**
- B. Regeneration Method: There is currently an abundance of natural regeneration on the site including ponderosa pine, western larch, Douglas-fir, western red cedar and grand fir. Following harvest operations, there will be no need to plant any additional seedlings.**
- C. Pre-Commercial Thinning: The area will be re-evaluated 5 to 10 years after harvest operations have been completed to assess the need for pre-commercial thinning.**
- D. Close and/or abandon selected roads, at the discretion of the local Wildlife Area Manager, after project completion.**

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

- WDFW Priority Species and Habitat Management Recommendations**
- Maps showing: soil type, erosion potential, soil stability, and hydrologic maturity from NRCS Okanogan County Soil Survey**

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

None

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

A. DNR Forest Practice Application (FPA)

B. State and tribal cultural/ archaeological survey and protection plan approval

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 Rustler's Gulch Forest Restoration Project is located on the Rustler's Gulch Unit of the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. This unit provides important habitat to a variety of animal species including moose. This proposal includes approximately 505 acres of ponderosa pine/mixed conifer uplands in 7 units. Work on the project will occur between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 Current stocking levels throughout the unit far exceed the historic range of variability, putting it at high risk of epidemic insect outbreaks and disease. Furthermore, these conditions have also placed the unit at a higher risk of a stand replacement fire that will also pose a significant threat to the surrounding urban interface.

This proposal will reduce current over-story stocking levels to 12 trees per acre in those units designated for treatment. Leave trees be at least 10" diameter at breast height (dbh), with at least 8 of those in the 14" dbh class or larger. All trees greater than 26" will be left as part of the 8 trees to be left in the 14" and greater diameter class. Selecting dominant and co-dominant tree species with the best growing characteristics will be an important aspect of the leave tree selection process. Gaps and skips between treatment units will create a mosaic of age classes and stocking levels that will benefit many wildlife species. Leave trees will be designated with orange paint by WDFW personnel or their representatives prior to commencement of harvest activities.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, 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.

Phase 1 of the Rustler's Gulch Forest Restoration Project is located in portions of Sections 17, 20, and 21 in Township 30 North, Range 43 East WM. In Pend Oreille County, Washington.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. Earth

a. General description of the site

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

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

The steepest slope in either phase of this proposal is 40%. Most treatment areas are flat.

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.

The primary soil types found in the treatment areas are the Kaniksu sandy loam, Orwig sandy loam and the Sacheen loamy fine sand. Much of the un-treated area (on the steeper ground) are the Moscow-Rock outcrop complex and the Raisio-Rock outcrop complex.

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

There are no visible indicators of unstable slopes in the treatment areas of this proposal. Given the fact that those areas in excess of 40% slope were excluded from the sale area, it is unlikely that slope stability would be present.

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.

There will be no anticipated filling or excavation within the project area.

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

Minor erosion from roads found on the project area could result from log truck traffic. However, this threat is minimal given the gentle topography found on the site.

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

0%

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

- **Equipment will not be allowed on slopes in excess of 40%**
- **Skid trails on steeper slopes will be water barred appropriately following skidding operations as per written instruction and written approval of completed work from the WDFW Contract Administrator**
- **Exposed cut banks resulting from road building and/or maintenance activities will be grass seeded with certified weed free seed as per written instruction and written approval of completed work from the WDFW Contract Administrator**

- Drain dips and/or water bars will be installed on steeper roads post-harvest as per written instruction and written approval of completed work from the WDFW Contract Administrator
- Haul operations will be suspended immediately, until mitigation is approved in writing by the WDFW Contract Administrator, if any delivery to typed waters is observed

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.

The proposal will involve vehicle emissions from logging and hauling equipment. There should be no significant impact to air quality. Slash burning will be conducted in accordance with provisions contained in the DNR slash burning permit as well as any smoke management, Department of Ecology and local fire district regulations.

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

None

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

None

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.

Horseshoe Lake, Fan Lake and the West Branch of the Little Spokane River

- 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.

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.

None

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

None

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

No

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 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.

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.

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.

Spring runoff from snow melt and rainfall runoff could occur on the forest floor, roads and landings. Water will be dispersed back into undisturbed forest areas for natural filtration in vegetation and soil. Runoff intercepted by roads and ditches will be diverted through existing culverts, water bars, drain dips and ditches to the forest floor. If the event of an extreme weather event, runoff could reach nearby streams.

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

There is the remote chance that fuel or oil associated with equipment operations could be spilled and potentially enter ground or surface waters. The contractor will be required to have an approved spill kit in each piece of equipment to contain and clean up spills if they should occur. Fuel storage is only allowed in approved areas. The contractor is required to contact the WDFW Contract Administrator and the appropriate Department of Ecology Office immediately after a spill occurs.

- 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:

- Limit equipment operations to slopes less than 40%
- Install water bars and drain dips at appropriate road locations
- Install water bars where appropriate on skid trails after skidding operations
- Minimize rutting of skid trails and remove those ruts at the completion of skidding operations
- Apply certified weed free grass seed on exposed cut banks associated with new road construction or maintenance

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, 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?

A portion of the over story conifer trees greater than or equal to 8" dbh will be removed, leaving 12 trees per acre greater than 10" dbh post-harvest. Approximately 4 to 5 thousand board feet (MBF) per acre will be removed from the treatment areas.

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

None

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

None

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

Knapweed, Thistle, Hounds Tongue

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

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

Bull Trout

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

No

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

- **Protect snags and wildlife reserve trees (WRT's) where feasible from a safety standpoint (both to the operator and to the public)**
- **Create snags (in snag deficient areas) by cutting trees designated with 2 blue bands at least 10' high**
- **Create small patch cuts (1/2 to 1 acre in size) to promote browse species for big game species**
- **Mark trees with defect characteristics suitable for Wildlife Reserve Trees (Wolf tops, fire scars, unique features, etc.) as leave trees with orange paint**
Create a mosaic of treatment and non-treatment areas to create hiding cover, thermal cover and travel corridors for big game species

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.

None

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

No

- c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal?
List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

None

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.

There could be fuel spills when refueling equipment or oil spills while performing equipment maintenance. There is always the risk of fire from equipment operation in the woods. However, equipment has spark arrestors to reduce the fire risk. Burning of slash piles, resulting in temporary smoke emissions, could occur after harvest operations are completed.

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

None

- 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.

In the event of a fuel or oil spill, the contractor will be required to immediately contact the nearest office of the Washington State Department of Ecology and the WDFW Contract Administrator. In the event of a wildfire, the contractor will be required to immediately contact the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the WDFW Contract Administrator.

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

The contractor will be required to have an emergency plan approved by the WDFW Contract Administrator prior to commencement of timber harvest activities. This will include:

- **Contact information for the nearest office of the Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the WDFW Contract Administrator**
- **Inspection of equipment for spill kits**
- **Having a fire trailer and necessary fire tools on site during the closed season as required by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources**
- **Requiring the contractor to keep up to date and in compliance with the latest Industrial Forest Precaution Level (IFPL) regulations during the closed fire season**

b. Noise

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

Minimal noise from recreational vehicle traffic.

- 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.

During harvest activities there will be some noise associated with chainsaws, skidder, loader, and trucks. Typically this would occur during daylight hours only and when weather conditions allow. Heavy equipment noise may exceed 100 decibels.

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

Requiring equipment operators to maintain mufflers on equipment and wear appropriate ear protection.

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.

The site is currently being used for wildlife habitat and recreational activities. Adjacent properties are managed as working forests and rural home sites.

- 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?

The project site has not been used for agriculture, but may have been used for intermittent livestock grazing.

- 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.

Barn

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

No

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

Forest Land

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

Maintaining forest land with an emphasis on wildlife habitat and providing for recreational opportunities.

- 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.

Yes. The West Branch of the Little Spokane River.

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

None

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

None

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

None

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

None

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

The proposal is consistent with the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area and WDFW Forest Management Plan. This proposal will reduce the threat of disease and insect outbreaks that will in turn reduce the fire risk to the property and adjacent landowners. The long term goal is to restore the property to historic tree stocking levels and species composition.

9. Housing

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

None

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

None

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

None

10. Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

Not Applicable

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

Views will be less obstructed after completion of the project.

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

None

11. Light and glare

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

There could be headlight glare in the early morning or evening hours from headlights.

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

No

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

None

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

None

12. Recreation

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

Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, horse riding, mountain biking and cross country skiing.

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

There will be occasional disruption to recreational use for the duration of the project due to tree falling, equipment use and log hauling. There also may be minor displacement when slash piles are burned.

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

Signs will be in place to notify recreational users of logging activity. On occasion, roads may be temporarily closed for safety reasons.

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.

No

- 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.

No. A report of cultural resources investigations at the proposed project was conducted by WDFW's archaeological contractor and is titled "Cultural Resources Survey for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife West Branch (Rustlers Gulch)/LeClerc Timber Thinning Project: Phase 1 Rustlers Gulch East, Pend Oreille County, Washington" (Emerson and Stevens 2014).

- 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.

The project was reviewed by the WDFW archaeologist, who recommended additional survey to identify the potential for the project to affect cultural resources. WDFW

contracted a professional archaeologist (consultant) to conduct background research and field investigations to support project design. The final report was reviewing by the WDFW archaeologist, who finds that the project as designed is unlikely to impact cultural resources. As part of project review, WDFW consulted with affected tribes and DAHP. DAHP has concurred with WDFW findings and to date no concerns have been expressed by the affected tribes. In the event that potentially significant cultural resources are identified during project activities, work will be halted in the immediate vicinity of the find and WDFW's Inadvertent Discovery Plan would be enacted.

- 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.

When the proposed project commences, WDFW will operate under an inadvertent Discovery Plan. If cultural resources are identified during the course of operations, the WDFW Cultural Resources Inadvertent Plan would be implemented.

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.

Existing on-site roads will be used to access the project area.

- 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?

No

- 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).

No

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

No

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project 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?

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:

None

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.

No

- 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 _____

None

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

None

C. Signature

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature: _____

Name of signer Rod Pfeifle

Position and Agency/Organization Forester/ Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Date Submitted: April 13, 2015