

## SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

### ***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:*** [\[help\]](#)

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: [\[help\]](#)

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area-North Fork Cowlitz Creek Road Management**

2. Name of applicant: [\[help\]](#)

**WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife**

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person: [\[help\]](#)

**Ross Huffman**

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager

WDFW

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(509) 653-2390

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4. Date checklist prepared: [\[help\]](#)

5. Agency requesting checklist: [\[help\]](#)

WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable): [\[help\]](#)

**The road closures would be implemented fall or early winter 2015. Signs and kiosks would be installed to provide information and mark closed roads in spring 2016. Berms or gates may be installed at future dates at the start of closed roads to restrict unauthorized access as funding becomes available. Road maintenance or site rehabilitation may occur on roads as needed, included improving drainage structures (ditches, water bars) and repair of severe erosion and vehicle ruts.**

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. Future work would include grading, and maintenance of open roads to repair road damage, install water bars, drivable dips and culverts to divert water off of roads. If needed some closed roads may have vehicle barriers installed which would require some excavation.**

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal. [\[help\]](#)

**Vehicle counters (3) were installed from February to June 2015 on roads in the project area. A summary report is attached.**

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 known

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known. [\[help\]](#)

**Cultural Resources (DAHP, Tribes and USFWS)**

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

**This project addresses roads and trails that are currently open to motor vehicles and in areas outside of the Green Dot Travel Management System. The objectives of this project are to:**

- 1. Implement a road management plan for recently acquired lands on the Oak Creek Unit of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area in areas that are not part of the Green Dot Travel Management System.**
- 2. Improve aquatic and terrestrial systems by abandoning roads and trails that are causing significant resource and environmental damage, primarily in riparian areas.**
- 3. Restore habitat in areas highly degraded by off road vehicle use.**
- 4. Maintain access to adjacent USFS and DNR lands.**

**To meet the above objectives this project will close about 9.2 miles of road to motorized vehicles. Roads previously bermed or gated will remain closed to vehicles. All other roads in the area will remain open to motorized vehicles.**

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 northwest of Yakima, in Yakima County. Legal Description is T14 R16 Sections 17-19 and T14 R15 Sections 25, 33 and 35.**

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

### **1. Earth** [\[help\]](#)

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 general slope in the area is around 40% but there are small segments up to 60%.**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**Upland soils are shallow with loess, loam and clay and are very cobbly, riparian soils are deeper, with loam, clay, cobble and gravel. There are no agricultural soils in the area.**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**Closure of roads may require installing gates or berms to block vehicle access, excavation of road prism would occur in isolated areas, all material would be left on site. Open roads may require grading, installation of water bars, and ditches. No new fill material is expected to be needed.**

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe. [\[help\]](#)

**Yes, exposed soils could initially be prone to erosion, however road closures and grading are expected to improve conditions and result in less erosion.**

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

**Zero Percent**

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**Installation of water bars and grading to divert water off of roads. Closing problem roads to vehicles to allow vegetation to establish.**

**2. Air** [\[help\]](#)

- 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, equipment emissions.**

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe. [\[help\]](#)

**None known**

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**Maintain Equipment.**

**3. Water** [\[help\]](#)

- 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. [\[help\]](#)  
**North Fork Cowiche Creek and several unnamed seasonal tributaries.**

- 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. [\[help\]](#)  
**Road grading, vehicles barriers may occur within 200 feet of the creek.**

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

**No waste material will be discharged**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**In the future, road maintenance may occur to grade roads, install water bars to divert water off of roads and onto vegetated area. Some of this water may reach the North Fork Cowiche Creek.**

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

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)  
**Grading, water bars.**

#### 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 known**

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**None**

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site. [\[help\]](#)

**scotch thistle, difuse knapweed, Canada thistle**

## 5. **Animals** [\[help\]](#)

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. [\[help\]](#)

**birds: hawks, golden eagles, songbirds**

**mammals: deer, bear, elk, squirrels**

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site. [\[help\]](#)

**None known. Western gray squirrels a state listed species were observed in the riparian corridor of the North Fork Cowiche Creek. This is the location where road closures will occur.**

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain. [\[help\]](#)

**Yes. Elk migration from winter to summer range.**

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**Closure of roads to motor vehicles.**

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site. [\[help\]](#)

**California ground squirrels**

## 6. **Energy and Natural Resources** [\[help\]](#)

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

## 7. Environmental Health [\[help\]](#)

- 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.

[\[help\]](#)

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

**None known**

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

**None**

- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required. [\[help\]](#)

**None**

- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**None**

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

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

**Noise consists of rural recreation from vehicles including, trucks, jeeps, ATV's and motorcycles.**

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

**No additional noise should be created. Most use will occur during daylight hours**

- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**None**

## 8. Land and Shoreline Use [\[help\]](#)

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

**Property is currently in state ownership for wildlife habitat and public recreation. Adjacent private lands are zoned agriculture or rural residential.**

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

**Prior to state ownership the property was in private ownership and used for forest production and agriculture (livestock grazing). These practices still occur under state ownership.**

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: [\[help\]](#)

No

c. Describe any structures on the site. [\[help\]](#)

**A cellular phone tower is located on on T14 R16 Sec 18.**

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what? [\[help\]](#)

No

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site? [\[help\]](#)

**Forest Watershed**

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site? [\[help\]](#)

**Forest Resources and Ag Resources**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**Yes, upland wildlife habitat for all lands and NF Cowiche Creek for hydrology.**

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**

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**Property is in state ownership and is currently classified as forest watershed. Property is being managed for wildlife habitat and public recreation. Based on WDFW Mission and Wildlife Area Planning this use will not change.**

m. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with nearby agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**No nearby lands meet this designation.**

#### 9. Housing [\[help\]](#)

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**

#### 10. Aesthetics [\[help\]](#)

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 new structures**

b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed? [\[help\]](#)

**No views will be altered**

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: [\[help\]](#)

**Signs and kiosks installed will be well constructed and meet WDFW standards.**

#### 11. Light and Glare [\[help\]](#)

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**

#### 12. Recreation [\[help\]](#)

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

**The project area is a state wildlife area. The lands are used for recreational driving, wildlife viewing, hunting and hiking. The project is adjacent to other state and federal public lands.**

b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe. [\[help\]](#)  
**The project will close problem roads to vehicle use, however the property will still be accessible to vehicles. Non-motorized recreation should be enhanced.**

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

**Roads will be designated as open or closed to motor vehicles and maps and signs will be installed to notify the public. If needed gates or berms may be installed to further control vehicle access. Closed roads will remain open to non-motorized use.**

### **13. Historic and cultural preservation [\[help\]](#)**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**There are the remnants of a homestead site along the creek in T14 R16 Sec 19. However, no project work will occur near this 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. [\[help\]](#)

**Based on a desk review of past surveys there are no known sites within the planned project area. The WDFW archeologist found the installation of kiosks and signs to have a low potential to cause effects. Road grading, and vehicle installation is not being evaluated at this time as no funding is in place to complete the work. Prior to any ground disturbance beyond installing signs WDFW will complete a cultural resource review and consultation.**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**The project area has been reviewed by the WDFW Archeologist. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is currently initiating consultation with DAHP and Yakama Nation to determine if a cultural survey is warranted. If additional sites are identified WDFW will avoid disturbance in those areas. While digging WDFW will follow the agencies inadvertent discovery plan and have a trained Cultural Resource Tech on site.**

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. [\[help\]](#)

**The US Fish and Wildlife Service is currently consulting with DAHP and Yakama Nation. This project will have minimal ground disturbance and posts will be installed by hand. WDFW will follow an inadvertent discovery plan and will have a qualified Cultural Resource Tech on site.**

14. **Transportation** [\[help\]](#)

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. [\[help\]](#)  
**The project area is accessed via county road (French's Road) and US Forest Service Road (1302).**

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

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

None

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? [\[help\]](#)

**Based on vehicle counter information the primary road averaged 8.5 counts per day. It is unlikely that this count will increase after the project is implemented. However the total vehicle use will be moved to one road versus multiple. Weekends during the spring are the primary use time periods. A majority of the use is by ATV or motorcycle. See the attached vehicle use summary information from the installed Trafx counters.**

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. [\[help\]](#)

No

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

**This project is designed to close problem roads and still provide the public with access to and through the project area. This project has been reviewed by the Oak Creek Wildlife Area Advisory Committee which includes representation from motorized recreation community. There was broad support from that group to implement this project and direct motorized recreation away from riparian areas.**

15. **Public Services** [\[help\]](#)

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

16. **Utilities** [\[help\]](#)

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: [\[help\]](#)  
electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system,  
other \_\_\_\_\_

None

b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed. [\[help\]](#)

None proposed

**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 Ross Huffman

Position and Agency/Organization Manager Oak Creek Wildlife Area

Date Submitted: 10/27/15