



State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N, Olympia, WA 98501-1091 • (360) 902-2200 • TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

Sara Ashiglar  
1049 Port Way  
Clarkston, WA 99403

September 7, 2016

Tiana Luke  
Conservation Northwest  
360-901-9548

Dear Ms. Luke,

Thank you for your comments on the LeClerc Creek Forest Restoration Project—Unit 3. WDFW would like to respond to your comments below.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will apply the individuals, clumps and openings (ICO) strategy within this unit. We had already planned to leave the occasional clumps of existing large trees and western redcedar. However, we will use the ICO approach to create additional small clumps, individuals and openings across the remainder of the unit. Thank you for the suggestion. WDFW foresters have been trained in this marking technique.

Large trees greater than 26" dbh will remain across the area, and no snags small or large will be removed except as needed for safety. Where present, living trees >20" dbh in most cases are the largest, healthiest trees and therefore most desirable to retain. WDFW will maintain flexibility to remove some trees between 20"-26" dbh to address disease, spacing (clumps, openings), and the opportunity to release neighboring trees of more desirable species (e.g. to release ponderosa pine or larch in lieu of Douglas-fir or grand fir) where appropriate.

We appreciate your suggestion to use the Future Range of Variability across the landscape, rather than the Historical Range of Variability, and would like to incorporate that idea into future projects on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. Our goals for the LeClerc Creek Unit 3 are similar to those outlined in your letter. We wish to reduce the chance of crown fire, create a multi-aged structure, increase forest resiliency to insects and disease, make the forest more adaptable to future climate scenarios, and increase understory forbs and shrubs for browse.

WDFW proposes cutting to less than the suggested 40 TPA. We are generally managing the Northern Rocky Mountain Dry-mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest type based on the Guide to Washington's Ecological Systems. This generic Historic Range of Variability suggests forests should have 28-40 large TPA on site. WDFW would like to retain lower TPA for the following reasons: 1) WDFW would like to create more openings where desirable sun-loving tree species

could potentially become established and thereby create mixed-aged/mixed species stands, 2) temporarily boost growth of browse species for deer, elk and moose, 3) reduce infestation of mistletoe in western larch, and 4) increase forest resiliency under future climate scenarios that are warmer, drier and with extended fire seasons. Leaving closer to 20 large TPA would allow us to meet these goals, account for natural gaps already present in the stand, and maintain flexibility to treat disease pockets in the stand. It should be noted that this TPA target is intended to be the average across the stand, with 12TPA as the lowest (in already open areas and areas with disease issues). There will be variation across the site depending on existing stand conditions on the ground and the use of the ICO mark as suggested.

At a landscape scale surrounding Unit 3, the neighbors are largely managing for high density timber production and even-aged management, with dense riparian corridors and efficient road systems. DNR has completed some thinnings to improve forest health as well. WDFW would like to create a 25-acre patch of fire-resilient forest with large trees, variable spacing, and clumps that provides long-term habitat for deer, elk and moose, as well as other forest animals. No new roads would be created.

We will likely plan a small project on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area in the next year or two. We would like to invite Conservation Northwest to join in this process if interested, perhaps to consider the prescription in the context of landscape-scale analysis as you suggest.

Thank you for your comments, please feel free to write or call with further comments and questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Ashiglar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S" and "A".

Sara Ashiglar  
Forester