



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200 • (360) 902-2200 • TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 19-042: COUGAR CANYON UNDERBURN

Description of Proposal:

The Cougar Canyon Underburn is intended to improve the ecological integrity of the forest landscape, benefitting multiple wildlife species and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. This will be achieved by increasing the relative abundance of fire & drought resistant trees like ponderosa pine & western larch, reducing fuel load and connectivity to overstory trees, and increasing cover of native understory vegetation.

Approximately 235 acres across 2 units will be underburned in stands commercially and non-commercially thinned in 2000. Current stand composition is variable across the project area, from closed-canopy Douglas-fir to open ponderosa pine. Patches of small trees, and areas of open grass/shrubland are scattered within the forest landscape. Across the project area, moderate levels of conifer slash less-than (<) 8 inches diameter are still present from past thinnings, particularly in closed-canopy Douglas-fir stands.

In order to facilitate burn operations, this project will include approximately 12,060 feet (2.28 miles) of road maintenance, 2,050 feet (0.39 miles) of fireline constructed by equipment on old skid trails, and the remaining 13,254 feet (2.51 miles) of fireline constructed with handtools. Additional tree cutting & pruning may also occur along fireline and roads to improve unit containment. Achievement of burn objectives will be evaluated with a combination of pre/post-treatment photo points, walkthrough stand exams, and installed fire effects monitoring plots.

(Additional information including detailed resource objectives are available on request)

Proponent/Applicant: Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Contact: Ben Hartmann
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Location of Proposal: WDFW Oak Creek Wildlife Area, approximately 8 miles west of Naches, Yakima County, Washington: Township 15N, Range 16E, Sections 19 and 29.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law¹ does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.² **We will not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end and comments must be received by **5:00 pm on July 24, 2019.**

Method of Comment:

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.¹

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: July 10, 2019

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 19-042.dns