



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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NORTH RAINIER ELK HERD PLAN
ADDENDUM 20-001 TO FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT (SEIS) 14-075 DATED: DECEMBER 3, 2014

Name of SEIS 14-075: 2015-2021 GAME MANAGEMENT PLAN

Description of SEIS:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has prepared this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) titled, 2015-2021 Game Management Plan. Changes to the 2003-2009 Game Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were proposed to update the plan for 2015-21. Strategies that have been accomplished or are no longer a priority have been deleted. New issues, objectives, and strategies are proposed based on public and staff comments gathered over the past several months.

Significant issues include: wildlife conflict management; recruitment and retention of hunters; hunter access to private lands; disease in big game; re-introduction of pronghorn; and wolf management. These issues, along with corresponding objectives and strategies, have been added to the original 2003-09 issues. Many of the original issues have been updated or modified based on new information and research, changing priorities, or emphasis.

Previously, the 2009-2015 Game Management Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) updated the 2003-09 EIS for species management during that period.

Description of Addendum 20-001: **NORTH RAINIER ELK HERD PLAN**

The North Rainier Elk Herd is one of ten elk herds, as defined by the WDFW for management purposes, residing in Washington State. This elk herd's range encompasses portions of Pierce, King, Snohomish and Kittitas counties. These elk are distributed along the western slopes of the Cascade Mountain Range, however, some elk that winter on the east side of the Cascades spend time on the west side during summer. Small satellite groups occur in the foothills and pockets of habitat near urban and suburban developments. This herd is an important resource that provides significant recreational, subsistence, cultural, aesthetic and economic benefits to Washington citizens and is a valued cultural, subsistence, and ceremonial resource to the Native American people of the area.

This plan's purpose is to provide direction for managing the North Rainier elk resource into the future as well as provide a historical perspective on the herd. This plan is subject to amendment as needed, and will be in effect until revised. It will be a valuable reference document and guideline for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, tribes, agency cooperators, landowners, land planners and the general public. Priority management and research activities will be implemented as funding and resources become available.

Four primary goals guide the North Rainier Elk Herd Plan:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, manage and enhance elk habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations
2. Manage the North Rainier elk herd for a sustained annual harvest
3. Manage elk for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing and photography
4. Minimize property damage and public safety risks associated with elk

Specific elk herd and habitat management objectives, problems, and strategies are identified in this plan. Priority objectives address specific problems in managing this elk herd, and a variety of strategies have been developed to solve these problems.

The following herd management objectives have been identified:

- Develop and implement standardized and statistically valid survey protocols that will generate reliable estimates of population size or indices of population trend for the North Rainier elk herd by 2025.
- Maintain the NREH at 4,850 elk (+ or – 10%), as determined by post-season population estimates, using the accepted protocols identified in Objective 1.
- Manage the elk herd to maintain minimum post-season bull to cow ratios of 12 to 20 bulls per 100 cows.
- While attempting to achieve the population objective, reduce the number of elk-caused damage complaints on private lands in the NREH area.
- By 2025 initiate at least two projects that focus on reducing elk vehicle collisions in high collision areas.
- By 2025 complete at least two projects that enhance the public's ability to observe and appreciate elk in their natural habitat or increase public understanding of elk biology and their habitat requirements.
- Meet as necessary, but at least annually to cooperate and collaborate with the Tribes to implement the NREH Plan.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Location of Proposal or Action: The 2015-2021 Game Management Plan is statewide. Addended North Rainier Elk Herd Plan will primarily cover King and Pierce counties and small portions of Snohomish, Yakima, and Kittitas counties in Washington.

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

This addendum is being distributed pursuant to WACs 197-11-600 and 197-11-625. The updated information provided above does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts in the existing environmental checklist. Based on the original determination and the updated information provided in this addendum, we have determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted.

We will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date of issue below. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **5:00 pm on January 24, 2020.**

Location of Documents: The 2015-2021 Game Management Plan and North Rainier Elk Herd Plan are available to be read during business hours at the WDFW headquarters office in Olympia (Wildlife Management Program, 5th Floor, Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE). Alternatively, they can be obtained by calling WDFW Wildlife Program at (360) 902-2515 or viewed or downloaded from the WDFW SEPA website at the following address:
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments>.

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

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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/closed-final>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal.

If you have questions about this determination, contact Lisa Wood at the mailing address, email address, or fax number above; you may also call her at (360) 902-2260.

DATE OF ISSUE: January 10, 2020

SIGNATURE:

