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

ADDENDUM 20-035 TO DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS) 15-046
DATED: SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

Name of Proposal: DNS 15-046: SOUTH FORK COWICHE CREEK FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION PROJECT

Description of Original Proposal:
The YKFP proposal for South Fork Cowiche Creek identified approximately 2 miles for wood replenishment and riparian enhancement on the Cowiche unit of WDFW's Oak Creek Wildlife Area. Restoration measures are to reverse channel incision and restore floodplain function. The goals of the project are to enhance instream habitat complexity and groundwater storage, which will in turn contribute toward improved flows. This project will provide additional benefits to fish and wildlife by increasing minimum stream flows, restoring the density and species composition of riparian vegetation, increasing the availability of pool habitat and cool water refugia during periods of high temperature, and providing suitable habitat for beaver re-colonization.

Wood is a critical component of stream ecosystems. The project will install wood structures to restore in-channel complexity, reverse channel incision and reengage Cowiche Creek with its floodplain. Log structures can be cost-effective applications that reduce stream velocities at high flows, thereby trapping sediment to help reverse channel incision. Wood will also be placed on the floodplain to promote roughness during floods. Fine material will be trapped which will promote seed germination, and provide microclimate heterogeneity for riparian re-vegetation. Floodplain roughness also helps avoid rapid channel avulsions that would otherwise hamper floodplain restoration.

Floodplain and aquatic restoration will require 882 logs to be placed in the channel and floodplain. Wood for the project will be harvested in the Oak Creek watershed. Timber harvest sites were previously identified in the Oak Creek Floodplain Restoration Project (DNS 14-048), however the method of harvest and tree removal has changed. Timber harvest operations will be conducted with ground based equipment on slopes < 45%. Trees will be whole tree logged and processed at the landings. Normal ground disturbance from a tractor yarder will occur. Logging slash at landings will be piled and burned and/or distributed along skid trails. Trees will be left in legnths as long as possible and hauled via truck to the Cowiche worksite.. After construction, the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) will install cuttings along disturbed banks and broadcast native grass-seed.

Proposed restoration includes the construction of unanchored log jams in the stream channel (with and without rootwads) and placed via cable yarder (Link Belt 98 or equivalent – a tracked, lattice crane with 54-foot boom). Pilings (vertical logs) will be driven into the bank using a 100-class

tracked excavator with hydraulic hoepack to encourage flows into disconnected wide floodplain areas where riparian vegetation is absent. Logs may be positioned individually or in small groupings. Small diameter woody material will be placed by laborers as racking material upstream of and within each jam. In addition, logs will be placed in the floodplain to enhance roughness and trap fine material during floods, in turn rejuvenating soil health and promoting native plant germination. All wood placements will be consistent with the Oregon State Guide to Placement of Wood, Boulders and Gravel for Habitat Restoration (2010) and Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines (2012).

Description of Previous Addendum 16-064 Dated October 17, 2016:
Additional wood is being proposed for the South Fork Cowiche Creek Floodplain Restoration Project located on the Cowiche unit of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area, project number is 15-046. The amount of wood needed for the project in our original proposal was significantly underestimated. The SEPA document currently says 882 logs will be placed in the channel and associated floodplain. According to recent calculations due to the level of degradation and channel incision in this area of South Fork Cowiche Creek, approximately 1500 will be needed to complete the project. All other aspects of the project will remain the same, only 618 logs are being added.

Description of Addendum 20-035:
Post project implementation in 2017, Yakama Nation staff have been visiting the South Fork Cowiche site regularly and particularly during flooding events. Some observations revealed numerous new beaver dams being constructed, formation of large complex log jams, and flood flows spread out over broad floodplains. There has been concern among the staff over relatively high velocity surface flows being observed in floodplain areas not treated with wood in multiple locations, even under frequent peak flood events. For the most part, these are observations that were hoped for following instream wood placements aimed at inundating floodplain surfaces. However, Yakama Nation has observed situations within the Yakima Basin where a floodplain that's been manipulated for agricultural purposes that becomes flooded can become the main channel as fast as 10 years in some cases. The result is an ever straightening channel with high velocities, vertical stream banks, and low to no flow during late season periods. Yakama Nation is proposing the addition of 157 large diameter trees, for a total of 1557, and install 86 vertical untreated poles followed with robust riparian planting to provide floodplain roughness and stability during flooding. In addition, demolition of old concrete flood irrigation structures will occur by filling the wells with bentonite and filling the rest with soil. This work will require follow-up and maintenance to top off over the next 5 years.

Proponent/Applicant:

Primary
Kelly Clayton
YN YKFP Habitat Biologist
PO Box 151
Toppenish, WA 98948
(509) 945-7195
clak@yakamafish-nsn.gov

Secondary
Ross Huffman
WDFW Oak Creek W.A. Manager
16601 US Hwy 12
Naches, WA 98937
(509) 653-2390
ross.huffman@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Current Proposals: Cowiche Creek is a right bank tributary to the Naches River. The project reach is located on the Cowiche unit of the WDFW's Oak Creek Wildlife Area near Yakima, Yakima County, Washington: Township 14N, Range 16E, Sections 34 and 35.

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 DNS and the updated information provided in this addendum, we have determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted. There is no comment period associated with this SEPA addendum.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

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

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

If you have questions about this addendum or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov.

DATE OF ISSUE: July 31, 2020 **SIGNATURE:** Lisa Wood

SEPA Log Number: 20-035 add to DNS 15-046

Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format or language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact Dolores Noyes at (360-902-2349), or TTY 771, or email (dolores.noyes@dfw.wa.gov). For more information https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/reasonable_request.html.