



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 22-006: UPPER ROBINSON FOREST RESTORATION

Description of Proposal:

The Upper Robinson Forest Restoration Project is intended to improve ecological integrity ratings, improve habitat for multiple wildlife species, improve forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

There are 411 acres on 3 units that will be commercially thinned to more closely reflect the historic range of variability. This will include reducing stocking levels to 25 to 35 trees per acre. Leave trees in all 3 units have been leave tree marked, with orange paint, using the following prescription:

In all units, the thinning prescription will use the Individual, Clumps and Openings (ICO) leave tree strategy in an attempt to move the units closer to the “historic range of variability.” All 3 units will be leave tree marked with orange paint. The following criteria will be used during the leave tree selection process:

- Species preference, in declining order of preference, would include ponderosa pine, western larch, Douglas-fir and grand fir. Leave all stand alone or small clumps of western larch.
- Leave all “unique” species that are limited to micro-sites in the stand (e. g. western red cedar and Engelmann spruce).
- All hardwoods will be automatic leave trees and will not be marked.
- In general, leave large diameter “legacy” trees over 24” dbh. The exception to this when species preference guidelines result in removing a shade tolerant leave tree species (e.g. grand fir) with a seral species (e.g. ponderosa pine) to achieve long-term historic species composition objectives.
- Leave trees with good growing characteristics (good crown ratios and relatively free of pathogens and/or insect attack).
- Leave defective trees with unique characteristics (trees with cat faces, “wolfy” crowns, large limbs, etc.) for Wildlife Reserve Tree (WRT) recruitment.
- In areas with less than 4 snags (WRT’s) per acre, the layout crew shall mark at least 2 and no more than 4 trees 10” dbh and greater with defect in the butt log with 2 orange bands at eye level for WRT recruitment. This indicates to the logging contractor that he needs to “snip off” the tree as high as he can reach with the harvester to create a WRT.
- In general, attempt to leave a residual stand with a post-treatment stocking level of between 25 (average 47’ spacing) and 30 (average 38’ spacing) TPA. Realize that these stocking/spacing guidelines are only intended as a spatial reference starting point. The

tree marking crew is expected to constantly adapt the marking strategy to account for changes in timber types and micro-site conditions.

- In dry ponderosa pine timber types (Units 2 and 3, ridgetops and south facing slopes), the tree marking crew shall leave closer to 30 trees per acre.
- In dry mixed conifer timber types (north facing slopes and protected draws), the tree marking crew shall leave closer to 35 trees per acre.
- QW
- For type NS Equipment Limitation Zones (30' ELZ's), increase leave tree density to approximately 35 to 40 TPA.
- The Individual, Clumps and Openings (ICO) forest restoration marking strategy will be used to achieve desired leave tree densities and spatial distribution post treatment. The table below shows general guidelines to achieve those goals for this project.

UNITS	TPA	CLUMP DISTANCE	INDIVIDUAL TPA	2-4 TREE CLUMPS/ACRE	5-9 TREE CLUMPS/ACRE
All	20-35	20'	18-21	2	1

- Maintain and create openings across the unit where appropriate. Take advantage of pre-existing openings with good production of browse species where appropriate.
- Minimum diameter for leave trees is 6" dbh.
- In general, leave all trees >24" dbh unless they pose a safety threat (e. g. tree is at risk of falling over a main line road) or they are a non-preferred species with preferred species surrounding (e.g. grand fir surrounded by ponderosa pine, western larch or Douglas-fir).
- Snags will not be marked as leave trees with orange paint. All snags that do not pose a safety threat, as per L & I guidelines, are required to be left by the logging contractor. Those snags dropped for safety reasons by the logging contractor will be left in place.
- Dwarf mistletoe infected trees provide important habitat to a variety of wildlife species and will be left individually or in clumps strategically across the unit (lower hillside, adjacent to non-impacted tree species, draw bottoms, etc.). The goal is to provide habitat benefits from dwarf mistletoe infected trees while minimizing impacts to other leave trees in the unit.
- The WDFW Contract Administrator will work closely with tree markers to make sure that the marking strategy is fully understood and implemented consistently across the landscape.

Logging slash will be piled at landings and will be burned as per burn permit conditions issued by the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The units will be assessed in 1 to 2 years post-harvest to determine the timing of prescribed broadcast burning (if funding is available). The goal of future treatments will be to continue the process of restoring forest stand structure (including species composition, tree densities and spatial arrangement) within the historic range of conditions found on these sites prior to 1880, when natural disturbance regimes were the primary ecological process.

Designated new construction and reconstruction roads will be abandoned or gated at the discretion of the LT Murray Wildlife Area Manager and agency road management objectives. Final road work will be completed after thinning operations have been completed. For roads to

be abandoned, this work will include culvert removal, installation of water bars, spreading slash and debris over the road prism at the beginning of the road, and grass seeding with a mix of native species. For gated roads, gates will be built and installed to Wildlife Area Manager and agency road management objectives. All abandonment work will be completed as per DNR road abandonment guidelines for light abandonment.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: WDFW LT Murray Wildlife Area, approximately 10 miles west of Ellensburg, Kittitas County, Washington: Township 18N, Range 16E, Section 25 and Township 18N, Range 17E, Sections 29 and 30.

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 at **5:00 pm on February 7, 2022.**

Method of Comment:

SEPA documents related to this proposal can be reviewed at the WDFW SEPA website at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments>.

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 through one of the following ways:

- Online at the Public Input comment portal for this proposal:
<https://publicinput.com/UpperRobinsonForest>
- Email to: UpperRobinsonForest@PublicInput.com

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/closed-final>. 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, or have difficulty with the Public Input comment portal, contact Lisa Wood at: SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov.

DATE OF ISSUE: January 24, 2022

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 22-006.dns

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 the Title VI/ADA Compliance Coordinator by phone at 360-902-2349, TTY (711), or email (Title6@dfw.wa.gov).