

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: January 13, 2023

Agenda item: 2023 Middle Hutchins Forest Restoration Project

Presenter(s): Richard Tveten

Background summary:

Fire suppression and logging practices prior to acquisition have resulted overstocked conditions with 1) elevated pathogen levels, insect activity and wildfire risk and 2) less diverse and less resilient wildlife habitat.

Staff recommendation: Complete the following projects

The Middle Hutchins Forest Restoration Project on the LT Murray Wildlife Area will thin approximately two million board feet on 588 acres. WDFW will leave between 25 and 35 (in general) of the best available trees per acre to improve habitat quality and put forests on accelerated trajectories to develop into resilient, fire-climax forests once again.

The area will be treated using ground-based equipment including feller bunchers and rubber-tired skidders. Previously abandoned and new temporary roads will be abandoned at the discretion of the Wildlife Area Manager. The project will meet or exceed State Forest Practice Regulations.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

This project is designed to restore ecological integrity, improve habitat quality for multiple species including elk and mule deer, address forest health concerns, reduce wildfire risks and increase the proportion of large-diameter trees.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The WDFW Forester believes that the project will break even assuming log and pulp prices do not fall, and fuel prices don't get too high. If the project doesn't break even, it can be subsidized with forest health funds.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife follows the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public review process.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Approval of the proposed Forest Restoration Thinning Project.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to approve the proposed commercial thinning project as presented.

Post decision communications plan:

Wildlife Area staff will notify the public regarding temporary access impacts.

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: January 13, 2023

Agenda item: 2023 Rendezvous - Golden Doe Forest Restoration Project

Presenter(s): Richard Tveten

Background summary:

Fire suppression and logging practices prior to acquisition have resulted in overstocked conditions with 1) elevated pathogen levels, insect activity and wildfire risk and 2) less diverse and less resilient wildlife habitat.

Staff recommendation: Complete the following projects

The Rendezvous - Golden Doe Forest Restoration Project on the Methow Wildlife Area will thin approximately 2.5 million board feet on about 464 acres. WDFW will leave between 20 and 30 (in general) of the best available trees per acre to improve habitat quality and put forests on accelerated trajectories to develop into resilient, fire-climax forests once again.

Most of the area will be treated using ground-based equipment including feller bunchers and rubber-tired skidders on slopes of <40%. The steeper parts will be treated with aerial yarding or cable-assisted machinery. WDFW will maximize the use of existing roads (open or abandoned), skid trails and landings. Previously abandoned and new temporary roads will be abandoned at the discretion of the Wildlife Area Manager. The project will meet or exceed State Forest Practice Regulations.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

This project is designed to restore ecological integrity, improve habitat quality for multiple species including mule deer, address forest health concerns, reduce wildfire risks and increase the proportion of large diameter trees.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The WDFW Forester believes that the project will break even assuming log and pulp prices do not fall, and fuel prices don't get too high. If the project doesn't break even, it can be subsidized with forest health funds.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife follows the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public review process.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Approval of the proposed Forest Restoration Thinning Project.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to approve the proposed commercial thinning project as presented.

Post decision communications plan: