



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 23-014: MIDDLE HUTCHINS FOREST RESTORATION THIN

Description of Proposal:

This is a forest restoration project of 536 acres involving selective mechanical thinning operations within the L.T. Murray Wildlife area. WDFW has ownership of said property. Thinning project will result in improved forest health, reduced wildfire risk in the Taneum and South Ellensburg Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), restoring forest closer to the “historic range of variability”, improved habitat for wildlife species including large ungulates, small mammals, and avian species. Debris/slash from timber harvest operations (limbs, tops, etc.) will be piled and trailed at landings in preparation for burning.

Slash burning will be carried out within wet seasons after timber harvest work has been completed when the threat of escapement is low. All slash burning will be permitted and conducted as per Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) conditions and regulations. Pile burning is expected to occur sometime between the end of November and the first week of December 2023 when conditions are optimal. Approximately 2 years post-harvest (2025) prescribed burning will take place within the project area and will be permitted and conducted as per Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE).

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Contact: Leland Lauffer
1130 West University Way
Ellensburg, WA 98926
360-584-8180
Leland.Lauffer@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Approximately 6 miles west of the Joe Watt entrance to the LT Murray Wildlife Area on Hutchins Road, Kittitas County, Washington: Township 18N, Range 16E, Sections 2, 3, 10, and 11.

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, 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 April 27, 2023**.

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/MiddleHutchins>
- Email to: MiddleHutchins@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: April 13, 2023

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 23-014.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).