



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

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 23-034: RECLASSIFY THE WESTERN GRAY SQUIRREL FROM THREATENED TO ENDANGERED IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Description of Proposal:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) proposes to reclassify the western gray squirrel from Threatened in the state of Washington to Endangered under authority described in WAC 220-610-110.

WDFW bases its proposal to reclassify western gray squirrel to Endangered on scientific information contained in its report *Periodic Status Review for the Western Gray Squirrel*. This report summarizes evidence that the western gray squirrel population is threatened with extinction in the state with more than 20% habitat decline in the core of its range since it was originally listed as Threatened. The report recommends that the species be reclassified as an Endangered species.

Although not well documented, western gray squirrels were probably once uncommon to locally common across much of their range in Washington. The species was in decline by the late 1800s and was considered rare by 1970. In 2007, the statewide population was estimated to be between 468 and 1,405 squirrels ($937 \pm 50\%$) based on data from 1994-2005. Populations have not been estimated since, but occupancy surveys were conducted 2018-2020 to establish a baseline for monitoring trends in coming years.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Contact: Taylor Cotten
PO Box 43141
Olympia, WA 98504-3200
360-701-8787
t.cotten@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Current and historical distribution includes the following counties in Washington: Klickitat, Yakima, Skamania, Okanogan, Chelan, Pierce, Thurston, Kittitas, Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Douglas, and Snohomish.

The Following Document is Incorporated by Reference: This document provides species-specific information on the proposal.

Wiles, G. J, D. W. Stinson, and AM. J. Linders. 2023. Periodic status review for the Western Gray Squirrel. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, Washington. 35 + ii pp.

The Document is Available to be Read at:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife - Natural Resources Building,
1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA, Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

The document is also available for review online at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments> and

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02410>

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 40 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 40 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **11:59 pm on October 2, 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/gray-squirrel-sepa>
- Email to: gray-squirrel-sepa@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: August 23, 2023

SIGNATURE: 

Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 23-034.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).