

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. **You may use “not applicable” or “does not apply” only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown.** You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to **all parts of your proposal**, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for lead agencies

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B, plus the [Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions \(Part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in “Part B: Environmental Elements” that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [Find help answering background questions](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Rule Making to Transition the Beaver Relocation Permit Program from a Pilot to a Rule-based Program

2. Name of applicant:

Lindsay Welfelt

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Stephanie Landry

564-669-9553

1111 Washington St SE Olympia, WA 98501

4. Date checklist prepared:

8/9/2023

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

Submission of Rule in Winter of 2023

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Not at this time.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

Not applicable.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

No applications are pending. Individual beaver relocators will be required to consider potential conflict issues at a relocation property before translocating beavers, and plans for any changes

to a riparian area would need to be permitted under a separate process such as a WDFW Hydraulic Project Approval

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

No approvals or permits necessary for WDFW proposal. Beaver Relocators would be required to acquire a Beaver Relocation Permit from WDFW annually before performing relocations.

- 11. Give a brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)**

Rulemaking to establish a permanent permitting program for permitted members of the public to relocate wild American beavers (*Castor canadensis*). Program goals are to offer alternatives to lethal removal in cases where all coexistence and mitigation options have been exhausted. Permits authorize relocation for a single year.

- 12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.**

Statewide. Release sites will be within the same watershed from where the be beaver was trapped, the watershed must not show any evidence of current beaver occupancy, it must not show any potential infrastructure conflict opportunities, and it must pass a site evaluation focused on beaver idealized habitat requirements.

B. Environmental Elements

1. Earth [Find help answering earth questions](#)

a. General description of the site:

The program would be implemented statewide. Beaver relocators select many individual release sites for each beaver captured throughout the relocation season and throughout the state. These sites are selected based on variable criteria and may be used or rejected based on seasonal impacts, so surface water types cannot be described at this time. Overall, beaver relocation sites are required to be streams with year-round flow and depth permitting beaver submersion.

Circle or highlight one: Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:

Not applicable

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

Not applicable

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them, and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

Not applicable

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

Not applicable

e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

Not applicable

f. Could erosion occur because of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

This program will not create erosion. Typically, beaver activity prevents erosion on the landscape.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

None

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any.

Not applicable

2. Air [Find help answering air questions](#)

a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

No emissions will result from this program.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

None

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any.

None

3. Water [Find help answering water questions](#)

a. Surface Water: [Find help answering surface water questions](#)

1. Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

Beaver relocators select many individual release sites for each of their captive beavers throughout the relocation season and throughout the state. These sites are selected based on variable criteria and may be used or rejected based on seasonal impacts, so surface water bodies cannot be named at this time. Beaver relocation sites are required to be streams with year-round flow and depth permitting beaver submersion.

2. Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

Beaver relocations will occur directly within streams, but no human-caused influences will occur to streams themselves.

3. Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.

No fill or dredge material will be placed or removed in surface water or wetland areas.

4. Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No surface water will be withdrawn. Surface water may be diverted through beaver activity, but not through human-induced change to the landscape.

5. Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Beaver relocation will most likely occur in areas identified as 100-year floodplains.

6. Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.

No human-induced discharge will take place as a result of this program.

b. Ground Water: [Find help answering ground water questions](#)

1. Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No groundwater will be withdrawn.

2. Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals...; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

No waste material will be discharged.

c. Water Runoff (including stormwater):

a) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.

No runoff will occur as a result from this program.

b) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.

Waste materials will not enter the groundwater or surface water as a result of this program.

c) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.

Drainage patterns may be affected as a result of beaver alterations of the landscape.

d) Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any.

Beavers naturally retain water within their complexes. Drainage patterns may change, but not due to human influence to the landscape.

4. Plants [Find help answering plants questions](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

- deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- shrubs
- grass
- pasture
- crop or grain
- orchards, vineyards, or other permanent crops.
- wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

Vegetation will not be immediately removed or altered through human activity in this program.

c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Threatened and endangered species may occur on these release sites, however, their habitat will most likely be improved by beaver presence as shown by peer-reviewed research.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any.

Not applicable

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

Noxious and invasive species may be present on these relocation sites, but the presence of beaver most likely will reduce populations of these species by encouraging native species colonization and competition.

5. Animals [Find help answering animal questions](#)

a. List any birds and other animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

- **Birds:** hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:
- **Mammals:** deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:
- **Fish:** bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:

The species present at these release sites potentially include all species of animals occupying riparian areas. All species of birds, mammals, and fish will likely benefit from beaver activity which enhances habitat quality at these release sites.

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

Please see above.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Beaver complexes often attract migratory species along their route. All migratory birds in Washington State who visit riparian spaces will most likely visit these areas.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any.

Beavers are known to increase biodiversity and abundance of wildlife, especially in areas where beavers are not currently established (as is the case of sites in this program).

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

Any invasive animal species in Washington State will most likely be present in these sites, but not as a result of program activities.

6. Energy and Natural Resources [Find help answering energy and natural resource questions](#)

1. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

This project will not require energy in any form.

2. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

This project will not require energy, solar or otherwise, and will not affect the usage of solar energy on adjacent properties.

3. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any.

This project will not require energy in any form.

7. Environmental Health [Find help with answering environmental health questions](#)

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur because of this proposal? If so, describe.

This project will not create any environmental health hazards.

1. Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

There will be no contamination at these sites.

- 2. Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.**

No hazardous chemicals will be used in this project.

- 3. Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.**

No toxic or hazardous chemicals will be stored, used, or produced.

- 4. Describe special emergency services that might be required.**

No special emergency services will be required.

- 5. Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any.**

No measures are needed.

b. Noise

- 1. What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?**

No noise will be generated from this project.

- 2. What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site)?**

No noise will be generated from this project.

- 3. Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any.**

Not applicable.

8. Land and Shoreline Use [Find help answering land and shoreline use questions](#)

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.**

The program will not affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties. Beaver relocators are required to use sites which contain both streams and stands of woody trees. Relocators are also required to gain support by adjacent landowners through the project's landowner before proceeding with relocation.

- b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses because of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?**

No agricultural or working forest land will be converted to other uses as a product of the program.

- 1. Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how?**

Beavers may affect surrounding working farm or forest land by manipulating the water patterns, but this will have a minimal affect.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.**

Structures are not conducive to beaver relocation.

- d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?**

No structures will be demolished.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

These areas are most likely wild areas with no zoning.

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

These sites do not have comprehensive plan designations.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

Beavers are not relocated to saltwater or brackish locations.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

Not applicable.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

None.

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

None.

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any.

Not applicable.

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any.

Not applicable.

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any.

Not applicable.

9. Housing [Find help answering housing questions](#)

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Not applicable.

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

Not applicable.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any.

Not applicable.

10. Aesthetics [Find help answering aesthetics questions](#)

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?**

No buildings will be constructed.

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?**

Not applicable.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any.**

Not applicable.

11. Light and Glare [Find help answering light and glare questions](#)

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?**

Not applicable.

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?**

Not applicable.

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?**

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any.**

Not applicable.

12. Recreation [Find help answering recreation questions](#)

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?**

It is possible that recreational sites such as hiking or mountain biking trails may be near some of these relocation sites.

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.**

No. This program would enhance recreation such as wildlife viewing, bird watching, fishing, etc.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any.**

Not applicable.

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation [Find help answering historic and cultural preservation questions](#)

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.

No.

- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

No.

- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

Not applicable.

- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

Not applicable.

14. Transportation [Find help with answering transportation questions](#)

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

No streets will be impacted.

- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

No.

- c. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

No improvements are necessary.

- d. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

No.

- e. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

Only one trip will be needed to transport the beaver. Relocators typically use personal vehicles to transport the beavers to these locations.

- f. Will the proposal interfere with, affect, or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

No.

- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any.

No transportation impacts will occur.

15. Public Services [Find help answering public service questions](#)

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

No impact will be made on public services.

16. Utilities [Find help answering utilities questions](#)

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other:

No utilities are necessary.

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

No utilities are proposed.

C. Signature [Find help about who should sign](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

10/27/2023

X Stephanie Landry

Signed by: Behling, Shawn (DFW)

Type name of signee: Stephanie Landry

Position and agency/organization: Carnivore Section Manager

Date submitted: Click or tap to enter a date.

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions [Find help for the nonproject actions worksheet](#)

IT IS NOT REQUIRED to use this section for project actions.

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

This program would likely decrease these elements through beaver activity,=. Such factors have been described in peer-reviewed literature.

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:**

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

This program would likely increase the abundance of native plants, animals, and fish as has been described in peer-reviewed literature.

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:**

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

This program would not be likely to deplete energy or natural resources but may increase water storage for increased hydropower production later in the year.

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:**

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection, such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

This program would likely benefit sensitive areas, habitats, and listed species.

- **Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:**

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

This program is not likely to impact land or shoreline use.

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:**

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

This program is not likely to increase these demands.

- **Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:**

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

This program would not conflict with jurisdictional requirements for the protection of the environment.