

SEPA¹ 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.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/Checklist-guidance>

A. Background

[Find help answering background questions²](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Draft Simcoe Mountains Unit Property Management Plan

2. Name of applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

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

Sandra Jonker

Sandra.jonker@dfw.wa.gov

5525 11 South Street

Ridgefield, WA 98642

4. Date checklist prepared:

6/05/2024

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

We hope to finalize the draft plan through the Simcoe Mountain Unit Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) process by Spring of 2025. We plan to begin implementing the plan in Spring 2025, immediately after we finalize it. The Draft plan identifies Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures, Tasks, and associated Leads with varying timelines for many of the objectives. Leads can begin gathering resources and implementing the identified tasks as soon as the plan is finalized.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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.

None

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

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-A-Background>

None

11. Give 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.)

WDFW proposes to implement a Management Plan for the Simcoe Mountains Unit on just over 10,000 acres using best and adaptive management practices to achieve fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation measures; protect cultural resources; allow for compatible recreational uses; maintain or improve hydrologic processes; and manage forestry and grazing that support cultural, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, recreation, and working land values.

The Simcoe Mountains Unit Property Management Plan was developed using the established guidelines of the Coordinated Resources Management (CRM) process. The Simcoe Mountains Unit CRM community process was initiated in September 2016 by the Eastern Klickitat Conservation District (EKCD), Central Klickitat Conservation District (CKCD), and the WDFW. The CRM planning process was designed to provide a collaborative approach to the development of an adaptive property management plan for the Simcoe Mountains Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area to include components for each of the following Conservation Values: Recreational Values, Fish Habitat Values, Wildlife Habitat Values, Water Quality, Quantity, and Hydrology Values, and Working Lands Values, including grazing and forestry.

Participants in the CRM and the development of this Property Management Plan include representatives from: WDFW, EKCD, CKCD, Yakama Nation, Klickitat County, grazing permittees, NRCS, Western Pacific Timber, Columbia Land Trust, neighboring landowners, and the local outdoor recreation community. All participants in the CRM process agreed to the following Objectives Statement for the Simcoe Mountains Unit management plan: *“Collaborative management, habitat stewardship, and conservation for multiple uses – cultural, recreation, working lands, fish and wildlife.”* The result of this process and approach is the Draft Simcoe Mountains Unit Property Management Plan.

The final Simcoe Mountains Unit Management Plan will be included as an addendum to the Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan, though the process of writing the content of the Simcoe Mountains Unit Management Plan is unique and distinct from the other portions of the Klickitat Wildlife Area Plan.

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.

The 10, 892-acre Simcoe Mountains Unit is located in Klickitat County in the Simcoe Mountains (which define the southeastern extent of the Cascade Range in Washington (Figure 1 and 2). The Simcoe Mountains are the initiation point for the Rock Creek drainage, representing one of the most diverse fish and wildlife habitats in southcentral Washington. The Simcoe Mountains Unit is east of Highway 97, west of the Bickleton Highway, and adjacent to the Yakama Reservation to the North. The Simcoe Mountains Unit connects lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Yakama Nation, The Nature Conservancy, Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and other large private forest and ranch lands.

Directions: The Simcoe Mountains Unit is approximately 15 miles east of Goldendale. From Highway 97 at Goldendale, Klickitat County, travel approximately 10 miles north to Box Canyon Road. Turn right (East) on Box Canyon Road and travel approximately 7 miles to the end of the county road and gate.

Section, Township, and Range: T6N18E and T5N18E.

Figure 1. Simcoe Mountains Unit Vicinity Map.

Figure 2. Simcoe Mountains Unit Map.

B.Environmental Elements

1. Earth

[Find help answering earth questions³](https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-earth)

a. General description of the site:

The site is located in the Simcoe Mountains which define the southeastern extent of the Cascade Range in Washington. The Simcoes are the initiation point for the Rock Creek drainage, representing one of the most diverse fish and wildlife habitats in southcentral Washington. The upper riparian zones of the Rock Creek basin are comprised of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and Oregon white oak communities, while the mid-elevation riparian areas are made up of a unique, high quality white alder plant community not found in other areas of eastern Washington. The area within the Simcoe project includes mixed conifer forest, Oregon oak woodlands, grassland, shrub-steppe,

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-earth>

riparian, and in-stream habitats. Collectively, these habitats provide for the life needs of a variety of wildlife and fish species.

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

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

N/A

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.

Soil map units predominantly associated with forestland ecological sites. Some rangeland ecological sites are also present. Forestland ecological sites are generally Oregon White Oak/Ponderosa Pine Hot Moderately Dry Shrub or Oregon White Oak/Ponderosa Pine Hot Dry Herb/Shrub. Most rangeland ecological sites are designated as either Very Shallow 16-24" PZ or Loamy 16-24" PZ. Soils on these sites are mapped as a combination of colluvium and residuum derived from basalt, loess, and volcanic ash.

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

N/A

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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

2. Air

[Find help answering air questions](#)⁴

- 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.**

N/A

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

N/A

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

3. Water

[Find help answering water questions](#)⁵

- a. **Surface:**

[Find help answering surface water questions](#)⁶

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.**

The unit contains numerous headwater tributaries to the Rock Creek subbasin, which drains 226 square miles. Outside of the unit boundaries, Rock Creek flows into the Columbia River at river mile 230, roughly 12 miles upstream from the John Day Dam. Rock Creek watershed elevations range from 4,700 ft. in headwater areas to 266 ft. at its confluence with the Columbia River. The Simcoe Mountains Unit contains about 30 total stream miles ranging between 2,400-4,700 ft. in elevation. A few streams in the unit feed directly into Rock Creek, while most unit streams, including Box Canyon and Dairy Canyon Creek, flow into Quartz Creek, a major Rock Creek tributary. Drainages are predominantly southerly facing and exhibit steep topography. There are 10 springs mapped on the Unit. Four springs are developed and used as a water source for livestock and wildlife water, including Milk Ranch Spring, Stump Spring, and two unnamed springs in the northeastern part of the unit. Draws are typically well-armed, often steep-sided, and with little, if any, wetland-obligate vegetation for lengthy stretches. Hydrologic soil group characterizations in

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-Air>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-3-Water>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-3-Water/Environmental-elements-Surface-water>

the Rock Creek Basin vary. Most soils (56%) are classified as Group B (moderate infiltration rates) or Group C (slow infiltration rates). The Rock Creek Basin also has a relatively large proportion (36%) of Group D soils (very slow infiltration, high runoff).

- 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.**

N/A

- 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.**

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

- 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.**

N/A

b. Ground:

[Find help answering ground water questions](#)⁷

- 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.**

N/A

- 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.**

N/A

c. Water Runoff (including stormwater):

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-3-Water/Environmental-elements-Groundwater>

1. 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.

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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?

N/A

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

According to current spatial data from the Washington Natural Heritage Program, and from work supported by the Rare Care program at the University of Washington, several sensitive plant species have been observed on or near the Simcoe Mountains Unit. These include the state-threatened *Juncus hemiendytus* var. *hemiendytus* and the state-sensitive *Boechera atrorubens*, *Crepis bakeri*, *Leptosiphon bolanderi*, *Trichostemma oblongum*, and *Zeltnera muhlenbergii*.

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

N/A

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

The [weed management plan](#) of the Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan identifies species, timing, and management practices to control weeds. The goal of weed control in the plan is to maintain or improve habitat for fish and wildlife, meet legal obligations, and protect adjacent private lands. To meet these goals, WDFW uses integrated pest management (IPM), which is defined in RCW 17.15.010 as “a coordinated decision-making and action process that uses the most appropriate pest control methods and strategy in an environmentally and economically sound manner to meet agency programmatic pest management objectives.” The two main weeds on the Simcoe Mountains Unit are the Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), which are typically found in recently disturbed areas (logging or fire). Knapweed was reported to be on the unit but appears to have been greatly reduced or eradicated by Western Pacific Timber’s efforts. Wildlife Area staff will treat known infestations annually and monitor new infestations during their regular work. Grazing permittees are also required to report any new weed sightings on their permit area.

5. Animals

[Find help answering animal questions](#)⁸

- 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.**

An inventory of wildlife species has not been conducted, but this task is included in Goal 4 of Appendix A of the Draft Management Plan. Some key species that are known to exist on or in the vicinity of the unit include mule deer, black bear, cougar, bobcat, coyote, upland game birds, state threatened western gray squirrel, golden eagle, burrowing owl, Lewis’s and white-headed woodpeckers, northern goshawk, Swainson’s hawk, grasshopper sparrow, southern alligator lizard, sharp tailed and ring-neck snakes, and western toad.

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

An inventory of wildlife species has not been conducted yet on the Simcoe Unit, but this task is included in Goal 4 of Appendix A of the Draft Management Plan.

Threatened and endangered Species that are currently known on site: Western gray squirrel and Mid-Columbia Steelhead Trout.

In the recent publication “Strategy to Protect State and Federally Recognized Bumble Bees of Conservation Concern: Washington State” (Martin et al. 2023), the Simcoe

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-5-Animals>

Mountains Unit is included in the Yakima Plateau and Slopes Ecoregion which is one of the highest priority ecoregions for conserving imperiled bumble bee species based on modeled species distribution.

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

Mule deer. Together the Simcoe Mountains and Rock Creek drainage provide year-round deer habitat as well as connectivity to summer range higher in the Cascades and on the Yakama Indian Reservation. Furthermore, the lower elevation habitat is critical for providing winter range for the Klickitat deer that migrate between summer and winter ranges. Mule deer are year-round residents on the Simcoe Mountains Unit, although, depending on snow level, may move to lower elevations during the winter.

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

The CRM process includes state, federal, tribal, county, and private entities to support a long-term partnership within a working lands framework of compatible grazing and forestry. Each entity is committed to continued watershed, wildlife, and habitat management with compatible grazing and forestry, while at the same time ensuring long-term protection of important wildlife habitat through the development of the management plan using the CRM process. The property was acquired using Critical Habitat Recreation Conservation Office grant funds that are made available to acquire and develop habitat for wildlife including game and non-game species; food fish; shellfish; and freshwater, anadromous, and other fish including habitat for endangered, threatened, or sensitive species. The Management Plan recognizes and implements the tenets of the funding source in the purpose of the proposed management approach for the Simcoe Mountains Unit. In addition, the site will become part of the WDFW Klickitat Wildlife Area, which will be protected in perpetuity for fish and wildlife and their habitats under the umbrella of WDFW's mission of sound stewardship of fish and wildlife to "preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife, and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities".

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

Unknown.

6. Energy and natural resources

[Find help answering energy and natural resource questions](#)⁹

a. 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.

N/A

⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-6-Energy-natural-resou>

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

N/A

- c. **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.**

N/A

7. Environmental health

[Health Find help with answering environmental health questions](#)¹⁰

- 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.**

N/A

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

N/A

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.**

N/A

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.**

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

b. Noise

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

N/A

¹⁰ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-7-Environmental-health>

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)?**

N/A

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

N/A

8. Land and shoreline use

[Find help answering land and shoreline use questions](#)¹¹

- 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 Simcoe Unit is owned by WDFW for fish, wildlife, and habitats. The property was previously owned by a private industrial timber owner that also included grazing leases on the property. The Draft Management Plan will not affect current land uses.

- 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?**

The Simcoe Unit was previously in working forest lands; however, the prescriptions were very light. Forested uplands are proposed to be managed to preserve, protect, and perpetuate forests as fish and wildlife habitat while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities. To ensure that habitat is protected, WDFW forests will generally be managed for high ecological integrity as defined in the mission statement of the *Management Strategy for Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Forests* (Tveten, 2014). Where appropriate, active management will be used to restore stands and accomplish the goal of achieving high ecological integrity. This will be accomplished with small scale projects (pre-commercial thinning, shaded fuel breaks, etc.) and large-scale projects (commercial thinning, oak restoration, etc.) as funding and resources are available. These projects are intended to provide the most favorable habitat conditions for a wide variety of species while making the stands more resilient to insects, disease, and catastrophic fire.

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?**

N/A

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

¹¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-8-Land-shoreline-use>

None

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

N/A

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

Forest land

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

None.

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

N/A

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

Prior to WDFW acquisition of the property, Western Pacific Timber administered two grazing leases on the Simcoe Mountains Unit. Site inventory, interaction with permittees, and literature review suggest that continued livestock grazing does not threaten the ecological integrity of the Simcoe Mountains Unit. Therefore, in the spirit of maintaining working lands in a manner that is consistent with community use and with WDFW's statutory mission, WDFW will continue to allot two grazing permits. Grazing permits will follow applicable statute, rule, and policy that requires Ecosystems Standards Assessments and ecological integrity maintenance ([Fish and Wildlife Commission Policy C-6003](#), [RCW 79.13.620](#)). Specific grazing prescriptions will be documented in each grazing permit. Per [WAC 220.500.200](#), the duration of any particular grazing permit may be up to five years, after which renewals are expected if grazing objectives are being met.

Forested uplands are proposed to be managed to preserve, protect, and perpetuate forests as fish and wildlife habitat while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.

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

The Simcoe Unit was previously in working forest lands; however, the prescriptions were very light. Forested uplands are proposed to be managed to preserve, protect, and perpetuate forests as fish and wildlife habitat while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities. To ensure that habitat is protected, WDFW forests will generally be managed for high ecological integrity as defined in the mission statement of the *Management Strategy for Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Forests* (Tveten, 2014). Where appropriate, active management will be used to restore stands and accomplish the goal of achieving high ecological integrity. This will be accomplished with small scale projects (pre-commercial thinning, shaded fuel breaks, etc.) and large-scale projects (commercial thinning, oak restoration, etc.) as funding and resources are available. These projects are intended to provide the most favorable habitat conditions for a wide variety of species while making the stands more resilient to insects, disease, and catastrophic fire.

9. Housing

[Find help answering housing questions](#)¹²

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

10. Aesthetics

[Find help answering aesthetics questions](#)¹³

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

¹² <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-9-Housing>

¹³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-10-Aesthetics>

N/A

11. Light and glare

[Find help answering light and glare questions](#)¹⁴

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

12. Recreation

[Find help answering recreation questions](#)

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

The overall recreation management objective is to provide sustainable fishing, hunting, and other recreational experiences compatible with conservation of high-quality habitat and protection of sensitive resources. The goal is to manage recreational uses to maximize benefits to the public while minimizing negative impacts to natural resources and meeting management objectives for fish, wildlife, habitat, and working lands.

Compatible recreational activities include: hunting, mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, collection of mushrooms, berries, or other edible or medicinal plant parts is allowed for tribal members for subsistence and ceremonial purposes, collection of these items by the general public for personal use is allowed on a small scale, walk-in overnight camping in certain areas.

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

None

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

Compatible recreational can be accomplished using various strategies for managing recreational use through space and time in conjunction with natural resource management practices on the landscape. One of the deliverables in the recently

¹⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-11-Light-glare>

published “10-year Recreation Strategy for WDFW Managed Lands” (WDFW 2022) is that WDFW will develop and implement a recreation plan for the Klickitat Wildlife Area, which includes the Simcoe Mountains Unit. When this module is available it will be implemented into the Simco Mountains Management Plan.

Recreational activities should be compatible with conservation of important habitats and protection of locations of sensitive wildlife, for example, raptor nests, wetlands, western gray squirrel nest concentration sites and rare plants. Impacts to and on resources should be monitored and evaluated (e.g., water quality, vegetation community, and wildlife and fish populations).

13. Historic and cultural preservation

[Find help answering historic and cultural preservation questions](#)¹⁵

- 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.**

None

- 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.**

Unknown

- 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.**

A Cultural Resources Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) has been developed for the Simcoe Mountains Unit to inform employees and contractors of the procedures to follow if archaeological and/or historic artifacts or features are discovered during management activities on the Simcoe Mountains Unit. The objective of the IDP is to ensure that archaeological and historic resources as well as human remains are appropriately treated until responsible officials can investigate the discovery and determine protection measures. This chapter in the Draft Plan was developed and written in discussion with Yakama Nation tribal members.

- 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.**

¹⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-13-Historic-cultural-p>

A Cultural Resources Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) has been developed for the Simcoe Mountains Unit.

14. Transportation

[Find help with answering transportation questions¹⁶](#)

- 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.**

N/A

- 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?**

N/A

- 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).**

N/A

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

N/A

- 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?**

N/A

- 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.**

N/A

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

N/A

15. Public services

[Find help answering public service questions¹⁷](#)

¹⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-14-Transportation>

¹⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-15-public-services>

- 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.**

N/A

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

N/A

16. Utilities

[Find help answering utilities questions¹⁸](#)

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

N/A

- 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.**

N/A

C. Signature

[Find help about who should sign¹⁹](#)

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.

11/18/2024

X Sandra Jonker

Signed by: Jonker, Sandra A (DFW)

Type name of signee: Sandra Jonker, Ph.D.

Position and agency/organization: Wildlife Program Manager, Southwest Washington, WDFW

Date submitted: 10 October 2024

¹⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-16-utilities>

¹⁹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-C-Signature>

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions

[Find help for the nonproject actions worksheet²⁰](#)

Do not 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?**

N/A

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

N/A

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

No negative effects.

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

The Simcoe Mountains Unit management plan is being developed to ensure collaborative management, habitat stewardship, and conservation for multiple uses including cultural, recreation, working lands, and fish and wildlife.

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

N/A

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

N/A

- 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?**

The Simcoe Mountains Unit management plan is being developed to ensure collaborative management, habitat stewardship, and conservation for multiple uses including cultural, recreation, working lands, and fish and wildlife.

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

²⁰ <https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-d-non-project-actions>

Implement the Draft Management Plan to guide the conservation of the landscape and all its uses and reduce the impacts.

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?

The East Cascades Eco-regional Assessment, the Washington Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, and the Columbia Plateau Connectivity Analysis confirm the importance of the Simcoe Mountains. The Rock Creek watershed is listed specifically in 8 plans for its importance to aquatic (salmonids), terrestrial (western gray squirrel) and floral (Oregon white oak) natural resources:

- Lower Mid-Columbia Mainstem Subbasin Plan, NW Power Planning Council, December 2004
- Rock-Glade Watershed Management Plan (WRIA 31), January 2008
- Columbia River Anadromous Fish Restoration Plan: Yakama Nation, 1994
- Klickitat Sub-basin Plan: Northwest Planning and Conservation Council, 2004
- Klickitat Lead Entity Region Salmon Recovery Strategy, Klickitat County 2011
- Washington State Western Gray Squirrel Recovery Plan, WDFW 2007
- Management Plan for Badger Gulch Natural Area Preserve, DNR 1998
- Columbia Plateau Habitat Connectivity Analysis (2012)

WDFW's Priority Habitats and Species or (PHS) list identifies species and habitats in the Simco Mountains.

The proposal will ensure this unique landscape is protected in perpetuity and would not allow or encourage incompatible uses.

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

Implementing the Draft Simcoe Mountains Unit Management Plan.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A