



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 25-005: WINCHESTER RAA RESTORATION PHASE 3

Description of Proposal:

WDFW proposes to improve wetland habitat to increase use by waterfowl and other wetland species and provide additional opportunities for hunters. The long-term goals are to improve water management, increase wetland function, increase palustrine emergent marsh habitat in an area heavily utilized by waterfowl and expand the number of acres available to support migrating, nesting, and brood rearing waterfowl and shorebirds. This proposal represents Phase 3 of work along the Winchester Wasteway and will restore an additional 54 acres of wetland hydrology by improving water delivery infrastructure, allowing managers to better mimic natural ephemeral wetlands using more effective water management. Phase I (completed in 2020) was funded by DU (\$34,362), WDFW (\$304,000) and small NAWCA (\$100,000) for restoring and enhancing 173 acres of wetlands. That phase included accomplished restoration of 50 acres of wetlands north of the WRAA with excavations, and earthwork in the Winchester Game Reserve to create a new water delivery ditch to supply water into the Winchester Regulated Access Area (WRAA), to enhance flows into all the wetland units (123 acres, claimed in Phase I). However, the improved water flow did not rehydrate all the wetland basins within the WRAA (the additional 54 acres proposed for restoration here), due to reasons stated above. Since that time, WDFW has managed the WRAA for waterfowl and public access, including partnering with a local irrigation district to maintain all the delivery ditches, and reducing invasive weeds within the WRAA. However, WDFW and partners still desire to expand this important area by further restoring the additional 54 acres. Phase II (completed in 2022) did not work within the WRAA, but an area to the north. Phase II was funded by NAWCA (\$100,000), WDFW (\$300,659), DU (\$14,190), Pheasants Forever (\$1,270) and WA Waterfowl Association (\$1,000), and accomplished restoration of 15 acres of wetlands with excavations, enhancement of 96 acres of wetlands by removing invasive Russian Olive trees and restoring 48 acres of uplands.

The work proposed in this Phase III is a return to the WRAA, with a plan to dramatically benefit all the acres in the main part of the WRAA (123 acres) and restore/re-establish the additional 54 acres, which lie mostly to the south of the main area, that have remained dry prior to Phase I completion. We propose to remove a degraded inlet structure, extend the main water delivery ditch, widen the main ditch to increase the flow capacity, upgrade water control structures, and add new structures and water delivery swales to manage water within the new/re-established acres. This will also allow for longer periods of water retention during both fall and spring migration. Additionally, WDFW staff will continue to manage exotic and invasive weeds and utilize moist soil management to enhance forage for migratory species. After Phase III is completed the restored/enhanced wetland corridor available to migratory birds will span

approximately 2.5 miles (North to South) and encompass a total area of approximately 1,000 acres.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal: The project site is a series of wetlands near Winchester Wasteway. The project area is located approximately 15 miles west-southwest of Moses Lake and 10 miles east-southeast of George, Grant County, Washington: Township 18N, Range 25E, Section 13 and Township 18N, Range 26E, Section 18.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment and that an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

WDFW issued this Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) under WAC 197-11-340. Agencies, tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this determination. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this document. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on February 20, 2025.**

Method of Comment:

SEPA documents related to this proposal can be reviewed at the WDFW SEPA website at: [SEPA documents available for public comment | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#).

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA determinations. 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: [Winchester Restoration Phase3](#)
- Email to: WinchesterRestorationPhase3@PublicInput.com

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this determination on the WDFW SEPA website: [Final SEPA documents | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#). After the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA Responsible Official and SEPA/NEPA Coordinator
WDFW Director's Office

Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

If you have questions about this determination or the details of the proposal, or need assistance with the Public Input comment portal, contact Lisa Wood at: SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov.

DATE OF ISSUE: February 6, 2025

SIGNATURE:



SEPA Log Number: 25-005.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).