



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 25-009: METHOW BIG VALLEY SANDHILL CRANE  
CLOSURE

**Description of Proposal:**

WDFW proposes to close portions of the Methow Wildlife Area from April 17th – September 30th. This SEPA checklist is intended to cover the 2025 closure, as well as potential closures in 2026, and other future years of closure implementation. This will include partially closing the Big Valley Unit. This closure will not include any of the other 7 units within the Methow Wildlife Area: Texas Creek, Golden Doe, Methow, Big Buck, Rendezvous, Hunter Mountain, and Early Winters.

The Methow Valley has become a space that offers core nesting habitat for the State Endangered Sandhill Cranes. Since 2020, the Methow Wildlife Area's Big Valley Unit has become the residence for a successful breeding pair of State Endangered Sandhill Cranes. Providing this history and intended purposes of the land within the Methow Wildlife Area the portions of the Big Valley closure will include core wetland, and surrounding areas that provide suitable habitat for nesting Sandhill Cranes. Many of the WDFW lands, within the Methow Wildlife Area were acquired with the intent to protect and maintain core migration corridors and habitat. The Big Valley Unit has offered a place for Sandhill Cranes to successfully nest and raise colts over the past four years with the aid of previous seasonal closures. Closing southern portions of Big Valley has shown to provide a large enough buffer zone to prevent displacement of the nesting pair. Displacement of the breeding pair has been a serious concern over the years as the nesting pair has established Big Valley as their nest location. Additionally, wetlands are one of the most biologically diverse habitats and within the Big Valley Unit. This area is popular with humans and their dogs due to the community trail, large array of wildlife that inhabit the wetlands and more specifically the rareness of spotting a Sandhill Crane. Thus, this closure is intended to aid and protect a core habitat, migratory corridor and nesting area for the State Endangered Sandhill Crane. These closures will be centered around areas that provide core nesting habitat and are known Sandhill Crane activity areas.

Areas to be closed (Approx. 240 Acres) within the Big Valley unit will be thoroughly delineated with closure signs, physical barriers, and maps detailing the closure boundaries. No public access will be permitted within the closure boundaries. The closure will begin at 12:01 a.m. on April 17th, 2025, and end at 11:59 p.m. in September 2025. As noted above, there may be similar spring closures in subsequent years.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
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**Location of Proposal:** The closure will occur within the Big Valley Unit of the WDFW Methow Wildlife Area, Okanogan County, Washington: Township 35N, Range 21E, Sections 19 and 30 and Township 35N, Range 20E, Section 24.

**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 March 10, 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: [Methow Crane Closure](#)
- Email to: [MethowCraneClosure@PublicInput.com](mailto:MethowCraneClosure@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](mailto:SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov).

**DATE OF ISSUE:** February 24, 2025

**SIGNATURE:**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisi Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SEPA Log Number: 25-009.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](mailto:Title6@dfw.wa.gov)).*