



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) AND ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT (CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION)

Name of Proposal: DNS/Adoption 25-014: UPPER WEST BRANCH LECLERC CREEK WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT RESTORATION

Description of Proposal:

WDFW proposes to remove non-native fish and restore the native Westslope Cutthroat Trout (Cutthroat) population in approximately 8.3 miles of Upper West Branch LeClerc Creek and its tributaries (UWBL). Proposed work will partially fulfill mitigation requirements specified for Pend Oreille River tributaries in the amended Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license issued to the Pend Oreille Public Utility District #1 (PUD) for operation of Box Canyon Dam. This project was approved by the PUD's Box Canyon Technical Committee in 2019, with Phase 1 (data collection) completed in 2024. This State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determination is for Phase 2 (Cutthroat salvage, followed by non-native fish (Brook, Brown, and Rainbow trout) removal via rotenone treatment) and Phase 3 (Cutthroat reintroduction) of this project.

Treatment of the entire West Branch LeClerc Creek Watershed is infeasible due to the size and complexity of the drainage. Rather, the watershed will be sectioned via the use of temporary fish management structures (tFMS), allowing non-native fish removal to proceed in stages. The first tFMS was permitted and installed in September 2023, isolating the proposed initial treatment reach from invasion by downstream non-native fish populations.

Native Cutthroat co-occur with non-native fish within the proposed treatment area. Therefore, salvage of Cutthroat will occur within the weeks leading up to the proposed rotenone treatment, and they will be transferred to the Seattle City Light Native Salmonid Conservation Facility (NSCF) as broodstock for Phase 3 reintroduction or relocated outside of the treatment area.

Annual piscicide treatments would occur above the tFMS until non-native fish removal is complete (estimated timeframe = 3 years). Relic beaver dams in tributaries would be notched to facilitate rotenone treatment but restored with Post-Assisted Log Structure Beaver Dam Analogues following non-native fish removal and Cutthroat reintroduction.

Salvaged Cutthroat would be held at the NSCF during the treatment period. Adults would be spawned annually to produce multiple year-classes of progeny for reintroduction. Progeny would be reintroduced to the project area upon confirmation of non-native fish removal.

The PUD completed SEPA review through Pend Oreille County with a determination of non-significance for construction of the tFMS to isolate the project area on April 13th, 2023. On July 6th, 2023, the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion (Bi-Op) on the tFMS, associated piscicide treatments (including beaver structure notching), and native fish restoration

with a determination of “not likely to adversely affect” for listed aquatic resources (including Bull Trout) and included a “no effect” determination for listed terrestrial species in the area. The Bi-OP informed the National Environmental Policy Act process, which was completed and approved for the project (including tFMS construction, beaver structure notching, piscicide application, and native fish reintroduction) by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on July 10th, 2023.

WDFW has made a Determination of Non-Significance and is adopting USFS’s Decision Memo which includes its Categorical Exclusion.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Contact: Kenneth Behen
1111 Washington St SE
Olympia, WA 9850122
360-902-2826
Kenneth.Behen@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Proposal: The mainstem West Branch LeClerc Creek and its tributaries upstream of the confluence with Mineral Creek in Pend Oreille County, Washington. Mineral Creek is not part of the proposed Project Area. Rotenone would be applied only upstream of the tFMS, with deactivation of rotenone via potassium permanganate occurring below the tFMS and extending downstream to the mouth of Mineral Creek. Cutthroat salvage will occur in any portion of the project area to be treated with rotenone or potassium permanganate. The project area includes portions of T36N, R44E, S03 and S04; and T37N, R44E, S14-17, 20-23, 25-29, and 32-35. The tFMS is located at 48.657145N, -117.238772W, with the terminus (most-downstream point) of the Project Area located at 48.649725N, -117.248286W.

Title and Date of Documents being Adopted: Decision Memo dated July 10, 2023, for “Upper West Branch LeClerc Creek Fish Management Structure, Fish Salvage, and Piscicide Treatments” which includes the Categorical Exclusion.

Agency that Prepared Document Being Adopted: USDA Forest Service, Colville National Forest, Newport-Sullivan Ranger District.

Description of Document (or Portion) Being Adopted: The portion of the July 10, 2023, Decision Memo for “Upper West Branch LeClerc Creek Fish Management Structure, Fish Salvage, and Piscicide Treatments” which includes the Categorical Exclusion, that pertains to cutthroat salvage, non-native fish removal via rotenone treatment, and cutthroat reintroduction.

If the Document Being Adopted has been Challenged, Please Describe: N/A

Name of Agency Adopting the Document: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

The Documents are 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.

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

As SEPA lead agency for this proposal, WDFW has identified and adopted this document as being appropriate for this proposal. We have determined that this proposal will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required. We issued this Determination of Nonsignificance/Adoption Notice under WAC 197-11-340, WAC 197-11-610, and WAC 197-11-630. Agencies, tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this determination. We must receive your comments within 21 days of the date of this determination. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on May 13, 2025**.

Method of Comment: 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: [LeClerc Creek Trout Restoration](#)
- Email to: LeClercCreekTroutRestoration@PublicInput.com

After the comment period closes, applicants and reviewers may view the updated status of this proposal 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

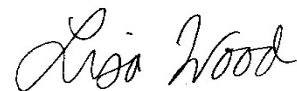
Position/Title: SEPA Responsible Official and SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Director's Office

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

If you have questions about this DNS/Adoption 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: April 22, 2025

SIGNATURE:



SEPA Log Number: 25-014 dns/adpt

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).