



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207
Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 16-009: RUSTER'S GULCH FOREST RESTORATION PROJECT
– PHASE 2

Description of Proposal:

The Rustler's Gulch Forest Restoration Project-Phase 2 is located on the Rustler's Gulch Unit of the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. This unit provides important habitat to a variety of animal species, including moose. This proposal includes approximately 450 acres of ponderosa pine/mixed conifer uplands in 11 units. Work on the project will occur between May 1, 2016 and October 31, 2017. These dates are subject to change depending upon weather conditions. Current stocking levels throughout the unit far exceed the historic range of variability, putting it at high risk of epidemic insect outbreaks and disease. Furthermore, these conditions have also placed the unit at a higher risk of a stand replacement fire that will also pose a significant threat to the surrounding urban interface.

This proposal will reduce current over-story stocking levels to 12 trees per acre in those units designated for treatment. Leave trees be at least 10" diameter at breast height (dbh), with at least 8 of those in the 14" dbh class or larger. All trees greater than 26" will be left as part of the 8 trees to be left in the 14" and greater diameter class. Selecting dominant and co-dominant tree species with the best growing characteristics will be an important aspect of the leave tree selection process. Gaps and skips between treatment units will create a mosaic of age classes and stocking levels that will benefit many wildlife species. Leave trees will be designated with orange paint by WDFW personnel or their representatives prior to commencement of harvest activities.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Sara Ashiglar
WDFW Statewide Forester
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any:

Phase 2 of the Rustler's Gulch Forest Restoration Project is located in portions of Sections 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29 and 30 in Township 30 North, Range 43 East WM all in Pend Oreille County, Washington.

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

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law¹ does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules². We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on March 23, 2016**.

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 any one of the following ways:

- Email to SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Dan Doty

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

Address: 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>. Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.¹

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Dan Doty at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call him at (360) 902-8120.

DATE OF ISSUE: March 9, 2016

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 16-009.dns