



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 16-029: WEST ROCKY PRAIRIE WILDLIFE AREA RESTORATION

#### **Description of Proposal:**

West Rocky Prairie is home to rare plants, animals, and plant communities of remnant South Puget Sound grasslands and oak woodlands. The sites are of conservation concern due to degradation pressure from a number of threats, including invasive species and altered disturbance regimes. The project goal is to restore these rare habitats, emphasizing needs for federal- and state-listed threatened and endangered species and WDFW's Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This project will: a) acquire native seeds and transplants; b) prepare areas for seeding (prescribed fire and invasive control); c) conduct seeding and transplanting; d) control high priority invasive grasses and forbs; and e) implement integrated Scot's broom control.

West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area is managed to restore and protect high-quality native grassland communities and wildlife populations. A major focus at West Rocky Prairie is recovery of two endangered butterflies, the Mardon Skipper and Taylor's checkerspot, and a medium sized mammal, the Mazama pocket gopher. Recovery of the federally listed golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) is also an emphasis at the site. Additionally, 4 of WDFW's species of Greatest Conservation Need, the Puget blue, Valley silverspot, great spangled fritillary, and Oregon vesper sparrow occur in grassland habitats. The butterflies require low density of Scot's broom, short native vegetation, and specific foodplants throughout the year. The Mazama pocket gopher needs areas without dense Scot's broom. The golden paintbrush needs short native vegetation and low thatch. The prescribed burns are specifically delineated to provide habitat for all of these species.

Restoration goals include establishment of a roemer's fescue dominated grassland with native forbs. Restoration necessitates control of non-native prairie grasses such as tall oatgrass, sweet vernalgrass, velvetgrass, and bentgrass. Bentgrass is the dominant grass at West Rocky Prairie. Exotic herbaceous species including cat's ear, St. Johnswort, sorrel and oxeye daisy also occur extensively and require control. Fire is a pre-planting tool that kills Scot's broom effectively, reduces moss and increases bare ground. No more than 37 acres will be treated with prescribed fire and subsequent herbicide application, seeding, and planting in fall 2016 through spring 2017.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
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[David.Hays@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:David.Hays@dfw.wa.gov)

**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area, Rochester, Thurston County, Washington: Township 16N, Range 2W, sections 1 and 12.

**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 law<sup>1</sup> 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 rules.<sup>2</sup> 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 June 22, 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](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Lisa Wood

**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.<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call her at (360) 902-2260.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** June 8, 2016

**SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 16-029.dns