



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

Name of Proposal: DNS 16-054: WOOTEN WILDLIFE AREA FLOODPLAIN
MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Description of Proposal:

The Wooten Wildlife Area Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) was developed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) as an integrated, cross-program effort to improve conditions within the Tucannon floodplain. Over the years the Tucannon River floodplain function has been compromised by certain factors including infrastructure encroachment and deterioration, large wood removal, degradation of riparian habitats, channel straightening, dike building and devastating floods and fires. The goals of this FMP were developed to address these factors: 1) protection and restoration of ecosystem functions of the Tucannon River, floodplain, and riparian habitats, 2) enhancement of fishing, hunting, camping, wildlife viewing and other recreational activities, 3) improvement of habitat conditions for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed salmonids (as well as other aquatic species), 4) improvement of wildlife habitats, and 5) protection and enhancement of critical infrastructure.

Two components of the overarching Floodplain Management Plan have been started under the initial SEPA analyses for floodplain habitat restoration and a second analysis for campground improvements. These SEPA Determinations of Non-significance are respectively: DNS 12-012 (finalized April 2, 2012), and DNS 14-020 (finalized April 30, 2014).

On-going floodplain habitat restoration will continue as outlined in the Floodplain Management Plan and original Determination of Non-significance 12-012. Work on most of these LWD and river channel projects are completed with several areas yet to be addressed. PA-11 was completed last summer (2015), and WDFW will complete 6-9 and 18 next summer (2017).

Certain post-project responses to the outcomes of FMP habitat restoration or campground redevelopment may require small additional work in the Tucannon River floodplain. These follow-up projects include LWD and channel modifications as well as a rehabilitation of Campground 3 adjacent to Rainbow Lake. The overarching plan for capital improvements within the Wildlife Area, also included in the Floodplain Management Plan, calls for a powerline to be buried in the road prism from the Hatchery to Camp Wooten. All of these follow-up projects are also considered in this SEPA checklist, and may be undertaken as described herein.

The project details covered in this SEPA analysis are all portions of the Floodplain Management Plan for which additional investigations are necessary given the limitations of the earlier SEPA analyses. This environmental impact investigation focuses on the Tucannon Lakes and the modifications planned for these man-made lakes: Rainbow Lake, Deer Lake, Beaver-Watson Lake, Big Four Lake, and Spring Lake. Curl Lake and Blue Lake do not have actions planned for the existing or expected budgets, but are also considered in this analysis in the context of managing the floodplain and channel migration zones to the betterment of natural hydraulic function and improved habitat. The first lake project to be undertaken is planned for Rainbow Lake.

Rainbow Lake is an existing 10-acre lake located just south of the Tucannon Fish Hatchery. The existing lake is primarily supplied through a diversion on the right bank of the Tucannon River at the Tucannon Hatchery diversion dam, located just south of the lake. The diversion also supplies water to the Tucannon hatchery. Over the years, sedimentation within the lake has reduced the capacity of the lake. Hatchery trout stocking levels have also been diminished. The shallow water column has resulted in higher water temperatures, and the increase in the temperature of the outflow from the lake to the Tucannon River is a concern for ESA-listed fish in the river. The lake currently consists of a dam that impounds the lake along the north and west sides of the lake.

The concept to make these improvements to Rainbow Lake calls for dredging, removal of sediment, and reconfiguration of the lake to increase the depth and volume, reduce water temperatures, eliminate dam safety concerns, increase trout stocking capacity, and increase angler access and opportunity. The improvement will also relocate the dam outside of the 100 year floodplain.

Two of the other proposed lake modifications include moving the edge of the lakes farther away from the Tucannon River floodplain and include the deepening of the lakes to address six decades of sedimentation and to provide the lakes with colder water. Regrading of the lakes areas will also be engineered to increase the presence of wetlands.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: 2134 Tucannon Road (Headquarters), Pomeroy, Columbia County, Washington: seven sections within Townships 8, 9, and 10 N, Range 41 E .

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 rules.² 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 September 30, 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/>
- 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.¹

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: September 16, 2016

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 16-054.dns