



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 16-065: GROUSE FLATS FOREST RESTORATION

Description of Proposal:

The Grouse Flats Forest Restoration Project is located on the Grouse Flats Unit of the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. This unit provides important habitat to a variety of animal species including Rocky Mountain elk. This proposal includes approximately 300 acres of ponderosa pine/mixed conifer uplands. Work on the project will occur between November 1, 2016 and November 30, 2017. 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.

This proposal will reduce current over-story stocking levels to 30-60 trees per acre in those units designated for treatment. Thinning activities will focus on removing smaller trees with a goal of increasing the average tree diameter at breast height (DBH) from 13 inches to 17 inches. Leave trees will be at least 8" dbh, though the largest, healthiest trees of desirable species (ponderosa pine and western larch) will generally be selected first. 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)
Contact: Sara Ashiglar, WDFW Statewide Forester
1049 Port Way
Clarkston, WA 99403
(509) 552-0142
Sara.Ashiglar@dfw.wa.gov

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Grouse Flats Unit of the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area, Garfield County, Washington: Township 6 North, Range 42 East WM, Section 1.

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 November 8, 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: 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/sepa_final_docs.html. 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: October 25, 2016

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 16-065.dns