



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 17-007: ST HELENS FOREST RESTORATION THIN

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

The St Helens Thinning Project is intended to improve ecological integrity ratings, create sustainable habitat for multiple wildlife species and improve forest health. The project is comprised of 6 commercial thinning units on approximately 260 acres and 4 pre-commercial thinning units on approximately 159 acres.

The project will be accessed using existing roads and construction of new temporary roads. Most of these roads will be optional roads for the contractor. If optional roads are deemed necessary by the contractor and WDFW Contract Administrator, the contractor will be required to abandon most roads post-harvest. The exception to this will be roads left open for management purposes (weed spraying, tree planting, pre-commercial thinning, etc.)

- A. **Slash Disposal:** Debris from timber harvest operations (limbs, tops, etc.) will be piled and trailed at landings in preparation for burning. Slash burning will be carried out after the timber harvest work has been completed. All slash burning will be completed as per Department of Natural Resources and Department of Ecology regulations.
- B. **Regeneration Method:** There is currently an abundance of pulp and small sawlog size timber on the site including Douglas-fir, western hemlock, western red cedar and red alder. Following harvest operations, there will be no need to plant any additional seedlings.
- C. **Pre-Commercial Thinning/Slashing:** The commercial thinning units will be re-evaluated after harvest operations have been completed to assess the need for pre-commercial thinning and/or slashing.
- D. **Close and/or abandon selected roads,** at the discretion of the local Wildlife Area Manager, after project completion.

Some fill and excavation work may be necessary to install 2 temporary culverts. Fill will include native material excavated for culvert installation and material excavated during road construction. Up to 40 cubic yards of native material fill will be used for each culvert installation. This fill will come from road construction spoils on site. Temporary fills will be capped with clean rock to prevent sediment delivery to streams. There may also be some minor excavation required on existing roads where cut banks have failed and ditches need to be cleaned out. Excavation will also be required on temporary new construction roads. Pre-haul maintenance on existing roads will include grading to make roads suitable for log haul. Spot grading will occur as needed during the actual logging operation to maintain road conditions. Most project roads on WDFW ownership will be abandoned post-harvest unless they are deemed necessary for post-harvest management needs by the wildlife area manager.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
Contact: Rod Pfeifle  
DNR SE Region Office  
713 Bowers Road  
Ellensburg, WA 98926-9301

**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** St. Helens Wildlife Area, approximately 20 miles east of Castle Rock on both sides of the Toutle River, Cowlitz County, Washington: Township 10N, Range 3E, Section 31 and multiple sections in Township 10N, Range 2E.

**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 March 13, 2017**.

**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:** February 27, 2017

**SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

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