



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200 • (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 17-037: SCATTER CREEK WILDLIFE AREA OAK RELEASE AND PROTECTION

Description of Proposal:

Scatter Creek is home to rare plants, animals, and plant communities of remnant South Puget Sound grasslands and oak woodlands. The site is 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.

The plan goal is to release Oregon white oak at the North Unit of Scatter Creek while maintaining a healthy riparian buffer. Release will be conducted through timber harvest and snag creation of conifers following guidelines by Harrington and Devine (A Practical Guide to Oak Release, 2006. GTR #666, U.S. Forest Service, PNW Region). In the sections of the harvest area that occur within an RMZ, the core zone will remain untouched. Trees will be removed from the inner and outer zones. The result of these actions will be the release of oaks from overtopping conifers to improve tree survival and growth. The desired outcome is to perpetuate a legacy of oak savannah and woodland at Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, which will enhance habitat for WDFW Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

At the North Unit of Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, a glacial outwash prairie abuts a mixed, coniferous/oak forest. The Oregon white oak occurs in a linear fashion at the edge of a conifer forest (see map), approximately 1500 ft long. Oregon white oak are being suppressed and shaded by encroaching Douglas fir, Grand fir, Western red cedar, and Oregon ash. There is a small, 1-acre area of excessive blowdown, and apparent root rot. Otherwise the forest health seems good, excluding the oak suppression. Topography within the alternate plan area is generally flat and gentle. Streams are low gradient. Conifer average age is 60-70 years, and measured heights were 40 to 150 ft. Average measured tree heights were 104ft. for Doug fir, 94ft. for Grand fir, and 93 ft. for Red Alder. The area where oaks will be released is approximately 21 acres. Harvest will be conducted between 15 July and 21 September, 2017. If harvest is not completed in 2017, it will be finished in 2018 during the same months.

Because oak release will occur within a riparian zone, the project is classified as a class 4 special under the forest practices act. WDFW completed an alternate plan, and DNR coordinated a field ID team to review the project in May 2017. No harvest will occur in the core area, but some harvest will occur in the inner and outer zone in a portion of the project area.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Contact: David Hays, Wildlife Program
1111 Washington St SE
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 902-2366

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: North Unit of WDFW Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, 16810 Case Road SW, Rochester, Thurston County, Washington: Township 16N, Range 2W and 3W.

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 July 20, 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
- 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: July 6, 2017

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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