



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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WDFW responses to public comments received during the public review of DNS 17-044 for the Wynoochee River Fishing Access project under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) from August 21, 2017, through September 5, 2017

The Department of Fish and Wildlife appreciates the comments and review of the 7400 Wynoochee River fishing access proposal. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will continue to work with The Department of Natural Resources, Quinault Indian Nation and Department of Ecology to address the concerns raised during the SEPA review process.

1. DNR comments regarding DNR aquatics lease for aquatic lands.
WDFW Response: WDFW understands a DNR lease is required for the use of DNR aquatic lands and will work with DNR to secure a lease for the project.
2. DNR comment regarding the need for a Class IV General Forest Practice Permit.
WDFW Response: A forest practice application will be submitted for the proposed work.
3. DNR Comment: Section A.7 WDFW should identify the plans for what will occur following the 5-year review. If the project is not renewed, there is an obligation to fully abandon or maintain the road to forest practice standards and block access to the area to eliminate the potential for damage to public resources. The crossing of the side channel will need to be abandoned to meet fish protection standards (see WAC 222-24-052).
WDFW Response: If the access agreement is not extended, the portion of the road beyond the parking area will be abandoned, the culvert removed and traffic blocked. The access road and parking area will be left in place to be used for forest practice activities. We will submit permit applications for this if it happens.
4. DNR Comment: Section A.9 there are no pending applications on file with DNR Forest Practices for future activities.
WDFW Response: Correct. The forest practice application has not been submitted for the proposed work. We will submit an application for approval prior to starting any work.
5. DNR Comment: Section A.11 of the SEPA checklist and the DNS notes that there could be as many as 100 boat launches a week at the site. This site is remote and given the projected volume of users DNR has questions regarding enforcement and access restrictions. Please clarify the plan to ensure that trash and other waste is collected and removed from the

property on a regular basis. Will trash receptacles be placed in the parking area and will they be emptied at a regular interval?

WDFW Response: The Department will post signs indicating users should pack out their own trash and garbage. The Department is also working with the local fishing community to set up a group of volunteers to pick up trash and remove invasive plant species. This would be something like an “adopt a launch” program.

6. Will the access point be gated in the evenings or outside of normal fishing windows for the area?

WDFW Response: Users will also be required to have a Discover Pass to use the access site. The access will be posted for daylight use only and no new gates will be installed. There is currently a gate at the intersection of the Wynoochee and 7400 roads that will remain open during fishing season for fishing access. Outside of fishing season the gate will normally be closed except during active timber haul.

7. Is there dedicated funding for the compliance/enforcement activities?

WDFW Response: There is no specific dedicated funding for compliance and enforcement activities for this particular site. Once the access site is set up it will be patrolled like all other fishing access sites. WDFW is already conducting enforcement patrols on the river from the proposed access site downriver.

8. Will WDFW enforcement officials have the authority to restrict access due to concerns for public resources and public safety?

WDFW Response: WDFW is a general law enforcement agency and has enforcement authority under state and federal laws. This includes the ability to restrict access to address public safety and protect natural resources. There are two gates that could be closed to prevent access in the event it's necessary to prevent access for public safety or public resource impacts.

9. DNR Comment: Section B.1.e and B.1.a.2 state that no new fill will not be imported into the site. The road construction and maintenance must meet Forest Practice standards. The road surface must be maintained to minimize erosion of the surface and subgrade; minimize sediment entry to typed water; direct groundwater that is captured by the road surface onto stable portions of the forest floor; and the road surfaces must be crowned, outsloped, water barred or otherwise left in a condition which prevents accelerating erosion or direct delivery of water or sediment to typed waters (see WAC 222-24-052). Utilizing the fill existing on the site does not appear to be adequate to protect public resources. Forest Practices recommends a road surface which will be appropriate for traffic during the rainy season.

WDFW Response: This was an oversight on our part and the road and parking area will be surfaced with crushed rock from a local rock source. The road will be crowned to shed water onto stable areas of the forest floor. The parking area will also be sloped to shed water onto stable areas of the forest floor. At the culvert

crossing, the road will be sloped to divert surface water runoff onto stable areas of the forest floor and avoid delivery to waters of the state.

10. DNR Comment: Section B.1.h exposed soils should be revegetated with native species, and non-surfaced or unmaintained routes should be blocked from vehicle access to prevent erosion.

WDFW Response: Exposed soils will be revegetated with native plant species to prevent erosion. A sign at the parking area will direct users on where they should travel to launch their boat and the unmaintained portion of the road on the gravel bar will be marked to direct users to the launching area.

11. DNR Comment: B.3.a.2 Forest Practices is concerned that the proposed 36” culvert on the back-watered side-channel with known fish presence will become plugged with debris and become a fish barrier. Forest Practices recommends a bridge design at this site (WAC 222-24-041)

WDFW Response: WDFW environmental engineering visited the site and concluded (report attached) the back-water “channel” isn’t an independent fluvial stream channel and is part of the Wynoochee River. The WDFW engineer also felt the water crossing design criteria wouldn’t be the appropriate criteria to use in this situation and used an alternative design concept to develop the proposal. We will continue to work with DNR, Quinault Tribe and other regulatory agencies to find a solution for the crossing site that protects fish and habitat.

12. DNR Comment: Section B.3.a.5 the delineation of the 100-year floodplain is not marked on the site plans provided, or described in more detail in this section.

WDFW Response: We will add this to future application materials.

13. DNR Comment: Section B.3.a.6 of the SEPA checklist states no discharges of waste materials into surface waters. In order to access the boat launch, vehicles will have to cross a gravel bar and launch vessels directly into the river. Please provide additional details on the plan for spill response. Will there be a spill response kit located in the parking area at the site in the event of a spill? Will signs be posted to direct users who to call in the case of a spill?

WDFW Response: A spill response kit will be staged at the parking lot in the event of a spill and a sign will be posted with information on spill response and the DOE spill response contact number.

14. DNR Comment: Section B.3.d should indicate that the road will have continued maintenance after construction to reduce or control surface water runoff.

WDFW Response: The road will be constructed to forest practice standards and maintained to prevent surface water delivery to waters of the state.

15. DNR Comment: Section B.4.e of the SEPA checklist lists the noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site. Are there plan or will a plan be developed to monitor and control the transport of invasive species from vehicles and trailers at the site? Will WDFW post signs to advise vessel operators to ensure vessels, vehicles, and trailers are free of invasive species transported from other areas?

WDFW Response: WDFW will include information on the parking lot sign to educate users regarding the spread of invasive plant and animal species.

Monitoring of transportation of invasive species is part of routine officer patrols at water access sites. Our enforcement officers are an integral part of our Agency efforts to control the spread of invasive plant and animal species.

16. DNR Comment: Section B.8.h of the SEPA checklist states this is a habitat conservation area and a shoreline of the state. As noted in the DNS there is a confirmed presence of fall chum, Chinook, and Coho salmon as well as summer and winter steelhead, coast cutthroat trout, and possible presence of ESA-listed bull trout in the Wynoochee River. Since there will be vehicle access onto a gravel bar there will likely be direct impacts to salmonid redds and larvae in the silt-gravel substrate. What measures are being taken to minimize or eliminate impacts to substrates?

WDFW Response: WDFW fish biologists have visited the site and anticipate little if any spawning will occur near the gravel bar or adjacent to the launch site since fish prefer to spawn in riffles rather than the characteristic glide at the launch site.

Users will also be prohibited from entering the wetted perimeter with their trailer or tow vehicle. Bull trout are not present in the Chehalis River system.

17. Will access to the launch be restricted during spawning seasons?

WDFW Response: No, access will not be restricted during spawning season, since our intent is to facilitate access to the fishing public. We will prohibit vehicles from entering the wetted perimeter, so no additional sediment transport downstream is anticipated that would impact spawning fish.

18. Will there be any measures in place to alleviate additional sediment transport downstream resulting from vehicle access to the gravel bar?

WDFW Response: WDFW will restrict vehicles to landward of the wetted perimeter, so no additional sediment transport downstream is anticipated. We will prohibit vehicles from entering the wetted perimeter, so no additional sediment transport downstream is anticipated that would impact spawning fish.

19. DNR Comment: Section B.14.d states that no additional road improvements are anticipated beyond what is proposed for this project. This proposal opens up an area to public recreational use for approximately 100 boat launches per week. This will bring approximately 100 vehicle and trailer combinations across primitive logging road. Section B.14.g does not provide any specific mitigation for the public safety hazard.

Will the road be closed to the public during periods of active timber haul? If so, who will enforce the road closure and how will that be accomplished.

WDFW Response: The 7400 is a two lane logging road with adequate room for two vehicles to pass safely. Signs will also be posted at the beginning of the 7400 directing recreational users to yield to logging traffic. From the junction of the 7400 and 7403 to the river will be a single lane road with pullouts to allow vehicles to pass safely. If recreational traffic becomes a safety concern during timber haul, WDFW will work with Green Diamond to restrict access to protect users.

20. Quinault Indian Nation Comment: The proposal includes an installation of a 36-inch diameter culvert in a fish bearing side channel. The channel Bank Full Width is 11.8 feet. A 36-inch diameter culvert is not an adequate size for the site. It will not pass the 100-year flood and it does not meet WDFW's Hydraulic Codes or Stream Design Manual to provide fish passage. I recommend a bridge or stream simulation methodology or appropriate size to support natural stream functions, fish passage, and hydraulic function. If a larger water crossing structure is not installed to WDFW codes, we cannot support this proposal.

WDFW Response: See response to question 11

21. Quinault Indian Nation Comment: The SEPA mentions the existence of the Wynoochee Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) and that the project is not within the CMZ, but the SEPA provides no assessment or map to support this. To properly assess if the project may cause any significant adverse impacts the aquatic and riparian ecosystems more information is needed. I recommend including a Channel Migration Zone Assessment consistent with Department of Ecology's Shoreline Master Program Guidelines.

WDFW Response: In a follow up conversation with Rick Mraz with the Washington Department of Ecology Rick wasn't familiar with a channel migration zone assessment related to shoreline master program guidelines. We will work with the Quinault Indian Nation to clarify and address their concern.

22. Quinault Indian Nation Comment: The SEPA mention there will be no measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and run off water. The proposal will include 100's of vehicles with trailers driving near the Wynoochee River during periods of high precipitation. This will result in sediment-laden water delivering into the river via launching of boats and driving on the forest roads found with the project area (and indirect increased potential sediment deliver from increased traffic on the 7400 RD). Fine sediment delivery to typed bodies of water violates the Forest Practices Act. Conditions and mitigation will be needed to control surface run off water, and drainage pattern impacts to avoid adverse environmental impacts. Possible solutions should include seasonal restrictions to public access, limit sediment delivery, and collaboration with Green Diamond staff on this topic.

WDFW Response: See responses to questions 3, 6-10, 13,14

23. Quinault Indian Nation Comment: No official consultation for cultural resources with QIN have been conducted. We recommend consultation with QIN's cultural specialist (Justine James).

WDFW response: We will work with QIN to address concerns regarding cultural resources.

24. DOE Comment: If contamination is suspected, discovered, or occurs during the proposed SEPA action, testing of the potentially contaminated media must be conducted. If contamination of soil or groundwater is readily apparent, or is revealed by testing, Ecology must be notified. Contact the Environmental Report Tracking System Coordinator at the Southwest Regional Office (SWRO) at (360) 407-6300. For assistance and information about subsequent cleanup and to identify the type of testing that will be required, contact Kirsten Alvarez with the SWRO, Toxics Cleanup Program at the phone number above.

WDFW Response: WDFW or Green Diamond are unaware of any contaminate soils in the project area, but will notify DOE if contamination is discovered or occurs during construction.

25. DOE Comment: WDFW Wynoochee River Public Fishing Access SEPA Environmental Checklist does not address the water quality and stream associated impacts that launching boats into the Wynoochee River at primitive locations will cause during the anticipated use window (fall and winter) with the anticipated 100 launches per week. No Best Management Practices (BMPs) are explained or proposed that would address the anticipated bank aggrading, bank mass wasting, and increased turbidity levels that are likely to occur while pick-up trucks launch their boats. There were two launch approaches flagged in the field, with one being steeper with loose unconsolidated side slope materials and the other was much flatted with the increased need for boaters to drive further into the Wynoochee River to launch their boats.

WDFW Response: See responses to questions 16-18. Use is limited to launching drift and pontoon boats and users will be prohibited from entering the wetted perimeter with the boat trailer or tow vehicle. WDFW does not anticipate any significant increase in turbidity levels as a result of users launching their drift or pontoon boat into the river.

26. The 7400 Wynoochee River Public Fishing Access SEPA Environmental Checklist does not provide adequate mitigation that would enable Ecology to understand that no significant adverse impacts will occur as a result of the WDFW proposed project.

WDFW Response: WDFW does not anticipate any significant environmental impacts as a result of the project.

27. DOE Comment: The following construction activities require coverage under the Construction Stormwater General Permit:

1. Clearing, grading and/or excavation that results in the disturbance of one or more acres **and** discharges stormwater to surface waters of the State; and
2. Clearing, grading and/or excavation on sites smaller than one acre that are part of a larger common plan of development or sale, if the common plan of development or sale will ultimately disturb one acre or more **and** discharge stormwater to surface waters of the State.
 - a. This includes forest practices (including, but not limited to, class IV conversions) that are part of a construction activity that will result in the disturbance of one or more acres, **and** discharge to surface waters of the State; and
3. Any size construction activity discharging stormwater to waters of the State that Ecology:
 - a. Determines to be a significant contributor of pollutants to waters of the State of Washington.
 - b. Reasonably expects to cause a violation of any water quality standard.

28. *WDFW Response: WDFW does not anticipate any stormwater discharge to waters of the State as a result of this project during construction.*