



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

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Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

**DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)**

**Name of Proposal:** DNS 18-018: SOUTH BACHELOR ISLAND WETLAND  
RECONNECTION AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

**Description of Proposal:**

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is proposing a restoration project on the southwest side of Bachelor Island along the Columbia River RM 90 in Clark County (Figure 1). The project includes excavation of a channel through dredge spoils area to connect existing emergent marsh wetlands to the Columbia River main stem. It is anticipated that native wetland vegetation plantings and tidal hydrology will help reduce infestation of invasive plant species and provide additional estuarine habitat function.

Historically, this wetland site consisted of offshore islands and side channel habitat. This changed when the US Army Corps of Engineers began placing dredge material from the Columbia River onto the site prior to 1951. By 1957, the outer shoreline of the islands was completely filled, creating an isolated pond, later named Turtle Lake Wetlands. Approximately 1.5 million cubic yards of dredge material was deposited along the shore over a period of 24 years. Access to juvenile salmonid habitat is now severely diminished. The few high water events when salmonids might be able to access the wetlands would likely leave them stranded for the remainder of the year.

In an effort to provide habitat to juvenile salmonids in the Lower Columbia estuary, this site has been identified as a candidate for restoration. The primary purpose of restoration is to reconnect 39 acres of existing wetlands to the Columbia River, providing secure ingress and egress to functional intertidal wetland habitat. A meandering backwater tidal channel would be created to provide year-round access to juvenile salmonids. This wetland habitat would be self-sustaining and fully influenced by tidal and fluvial forces on the main stem Columbia River.

The specific components of this project are:

**Improve Wetland Habitats** by connecting existing wetlands to the Columbia River through new low flow Channel: An excavated channel, approximately 2,200 feet in length and 100 feet in width, will extend from the northern end of existing open water wetlands to the Columbia River. The dredge material excavated to create the channel will be placed onsite on adjacent unvegetated areas and also used for shallow water habitat creation along the shore of the Columbia River downstream from outlet of new channel.

**Shallow Water Habitat Creation:** As noted, a portion of the excavated dredge material (up to approximately half of the dredge material) will be used to create shallow emergent wetland habitat along shoreline of Bachelor Island, with placement downstream of the connection of the new channel to the Columbia River

**Piling Removal:** A pile dike structure is located at the north end of the existing open water wetland. The structure consists of approximately 120 derelict untreated pilings, which were most likely constructed prior to dredge spoils placement, pre-1950. An excavator located on dry land will be used to pull one third of the pilings from the wetland.

**Native Vegetation Establishment:** Restoration and enhancement of native vegetation along the new tidal channel and other disturbed areas, will be incorporated into the project. Along the new channel margins, approximately 1 acre of channel shoreline vegetation will be established. Approximately one additional acre of replanting is planned for the shoreline area where the excavated material will be used beneficially for shallow water habitat creation.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)  
Contact: Donna Bighouse  
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**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** DNR state-owned aquatic lands on Bachelor Island, Ridgefield, Clark County, Washington: Township 4N, Range 1W, Sections 22, 24, and 27.

**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 April 13, 2018**.

**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 Habitat Program, Protection Division

**Address:** P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

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:** March 30, 2018

**SIGNATURE:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Wood".

Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 18-018.dns