



State of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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ADDENDUM 18-055 TO DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE 18-003 DATED: JANUARY 26, 2018

Name of DNS: 18-003 SHERMAN CREEK WILDLIFE AREA HEADQUARTERS FOREST
THIN

Description of Original Proposal:

The forested area surrounding the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Headquarters was laid out to be thinned as a part of the original Sherman Creek Wildlife Area forest restoration project. The prescription was to leave approximately 35 of the largest trees per acre with preference for ponderosa pine, larch, and cedar, and targeting removal of smaller Douglas-fir and grand fir. The headquarters units were removed from the original project due to the presence of a then-state listed bald eagle. Since then, the bald eagle has been delisted in Washington State. In the meantime, trees and fuels have continued to build up and the forest is still overstocked.

Forests in the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area historically were fire-dependent ecosystems, however no fire has been through the system in approximately 100 years. Trees are overstocked and unable to grow to their full potential. The lack of fire and related shade and thick duff layer has created a stand deficient of winter browse for deer. Additionally, the topography, heavy fuels and fuel ladders below the headquarters buildings create risk of uncontrollable wildfire should a fire run up the hill toward the buildings.

Project objectives include: Improve forest health by reducing tree-to-tree competition, reduce risk of stand replacing fire by removing fuels and fuel ladders, maintain good wildlife habitat by retaining the healthiest, largest trees, reduce risk of wildfire damage to the headquarters structures, increase winter deer range browse including ceanothus and other shrubs, provide local commercial economic opportunities compatible with wildlife habitat protection, as well as recreational opportunities.

25 acres of ponderosa pine forest would be thinned to approximately 20-40 trees per acre greater than 8" dbh, largely following the markings from a previous layout crew. Structural diversity in the form of clumps of large trees and gaps for future forest regeneration would be created. The largest ponderosa pine trees would be retained while smaller trees would be removed. Ladder fuels would be removed allowing safer and more effective opportunities for future prescribed burning. Trees with broken tops, forks, hollow trunks, and other defect may be left as future wildlife reserve trees. Snags would not be cut except where needed to meet safety standards. Any fallen snags would be left on site as downed wood. Part of the harvest area is within management buffer areas of established eagle nests. Thus, harvest would occur August 1st through Dec 31st to avoid impacts to eagle reproduction. Nest trees would already be protected by riparian management zones for Lake Roosevelt and would not be within harvest area boundaries. Large overstory trees would remain throughout the units, including within the 330 and 660 foot buffers.

Trees designated for harvest greater than 8 inches diameter at breast height and 5 inches top diameter will be removed from site as saw logs and chip and saw logs. Trees would be whole-tree yarded to landings in already open areas with rubber tired skidders. No new permanent

roads would be built. Landings and major skid trails created during harvest would be seeded and potentially ripped as instructed by the wildlife area manager. Skid trails will be water barred as necessary to prevent erosion and rutting will be minimized as much as possible. Slash will be scattered in the woods to the greatest extent possible. Some slash may be piled and burned on the landings. Prescribed fire may follow up thinning treatment if conditions and funding allows.

Description of Addendum 18-055:

The Boyd wildfire burned roughly ½ of the project area on August 11, 2018. Some of the trees that we had planned to retain were killed and some that were planned to cut survived. In order to meet the original goals of the project, the selection of trees to retain will be modified to ensure that original target conditions are achieved. The overall goals and prescription, however, are largely unchanged. In recognition that the fire could increase the potential for erosion, a few acres may be dropped and extra native grass seed may be planted on disturbed soils. Slash will be strategically placed on skid trails to reduce the potential for erosion. Charred pulp wood would not be removed, but piled and burned on landing sites. Also trees burned and identified as hazardous between the Avista and BPA powerlines would be removed where possible.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Area surrounding the Headquarters of the WDFW Sherman Creek Wildlife Area, 34042 Hwy 20 E, Kettle Falls, Ferry County, Washington: Township 36N, Range 37E, Sections 15 and 22.

Lead Agency: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

This addendum is being distributed pursuant to WACs 197-11-600 and 197-11-625. The updated information provided above does not substantially change the analysis of significant impacts in the existing environmental checklist. Based on the original DNS and the updated information provided in this addendum, we have determined that a new threshold determination is not warranted. There is no comment period associated with this SEPA addendum.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

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

If you have questions about this action, contact Lisa Wood at the address above, SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov, phone (360) 902-2260, or fax (360) 902-2946.

DATE OF ISSUE: August 21, 2018

SIGNATURE:

