

SF Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement Project

Decision Memo



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1. Decision

It is my decision to implement the South Fork (SF) Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement Project. The project will decommission a portion of the Gold Basin Campground to restore SF Stillaguamish River floodplain processes and improve water quality. The project is described below in section 1.3.

I have decided to implement the project because it meets the need identified in section 1.2. In deciding to implement this project, I considered comments received during scoping and the project record (including botany, wildlife, fisheries and heritage specialist reports which are incorporated by reference in this decision). I also considered the 2018 Environmental Assessment and Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Gold Basin Habitat Restoration Project. Note: after considerable review and coordination with Washington State agencies, the 2018 Gold Basin Habitat Restoration Project was cancelled but that analysis nevertheless informed the design of this project and analysis of potential effects.

Scoping for the proposed action was initiated in November 2019. Modifications were then made to the proposed action based feedback received during scoping (see section 4) as well as interdisciplinary review of the project. These changes are reflected in the project description (see section 1.3) and associated design features (section 2) described below.

This Decision Memo documents my decision to proceed with the project, consistent with requirements in the National Environmental Policy Act and related regulations. See section 6 below documenting my rationale for excluding this project from further documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

1.1. Project Location

The project occurs at river mile (RM) 48, 15 miles east of the town of Granite Falls, WA at Gold Basin Campground (CG). The campground is approximately 2.5 miles east of Verlot, Washington, and is situated between the Mountain Loop Highway and SF Stillaguamish River within Township 30 N, Range 8 E, Sections 13-14, 23-24; Snohomish County, Washington. Please see figure 1 for additional location information.

1.2. Need for the Project

There is a need to enhance fish habitat within the SF Stillaguamish River to help increase anadromous fish abundance and productivity and contribute to the recovery of Federally listed species, such as chinook salmon. To accomplish this need, the project intends to increase fish spawning and rearing success by reclaiming a portion of historic floodplain (see figures 4-6), enhancing aquatic habitat function and complexity and improving riparian vegetation structure, which will lead to improved water quality conditions. See January 17, 2020 Aquatic Resource Effects Biological Evaluation (BE) for additional information about the purpose and need for the project.

1.3. Project Description

The SF Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement Project will decommission a closed portion of the Gold Basin Campground to restore floodplain processes. Some of the campsites and related infrastructure adjacent to the river will be removed (see figure 1) and a section of the river

channel will be reconstructed through the decommissioned portion of campground (see figures 2-4). Additional project elements will include grading of the floodplain in the channel's former location (see figure 5), tree tipping, installation of large wood structures to provide bank stability and aquatic habitat complexity, strategic placement of other large trees to provide for channel and floodplain stability, and riparian vegetation planting where appropriate. Trees tipped will be left on site and incorporated into large wood structure installation where possible.

The entire Gold Basin Campground will be closed to the public during construction and rehabilitation of disturbed areas. Much of the upland and in-water work performed by heavy equipment is anticipated to occur between March and September 2021 although tree tipping would be completed outside of the marbled murrelet nesting season (tree tipping could occur from September 24, 2020 to March 31, 2021). Upon completion of construction, the remaining portion of the campground would then be re-opened for public use.

The actions described above will be implemented under a short-term special use authorization issued to the Stillaguamish Tribe.

The project will allow for fluvial and potential future landslide processes to take place while balancing the need to enhance localized water quality conditions by allowing new floodplain and riparian vegetation surfaces to act as filters to turbid water sourced from the landslide. Hence, along this reach of the SF Stillaguamish River the project is expected to provide conditions more conducive for spawning and habitat complexity by re-setting adjacent geomorphic and vegetative features.

2. Design Features

The following management requirements, project design criteria (PDC) and mitigation measures are integral components of this decision and will be adhered to and incorporated into the implementation of this project.

2.1.1. Botany Resources

Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive (TES) or Survey and Manage (S&M) Species

- If any previously undiscovered TES or other rare or uncommon vascular plants, bryophytes, lichens, or fungi are discovered, before or during project implementation, halt work until a USFS botanist is consulted and necessary mitigation measures are enacted.

Noxious Weeds

- Treat known infestations before ground disturbance begins. To be effective a lag time of 4 weeks is needed between the time of treatment and the time of ground disturbance.
- For actions conducted or authorized by written permit by the Forest Service that will operate outside the limits of the road prism, require the cleaning of all heavy equipment prior to entering National Forest System Lands.
- Suppliers must provide documentation indicating that the following products have been examined by a qualified inspector and deemed free of State listed noxious weeds:
 - Straw or other Mulch
 - Gravel, Rock, or other fill

- Seeds (according to Association of Official Seed Analyst standards)
- If weeds are present in the project area, all equipment and gear must be cleaned before leaving the project area to avoid spreading the infestation further.
- If weeds are present in the project area, work from relatively weed-free areas into the infested area rather than vice versa.
- Revegetate all areas of bare soil exposed by project activities if there is a risk of noxious weed invasion. Native plant materials are the first choice in revegetation where timely natural regeneration of the native plant community is not likely to occur. If native plant materials are not available, use the appropriate MBS non-native seedmix (per Potash and Aubry 1997).

2.1.2. Watershed, Soils and Fisheries Resources

- See PDC's in the 2015 Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinion (ARBO II) for activity type *channel reconstruction*. 2013 Programmatic ESA consultation Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinions (ARBO II) from US Fish and Wildlife Service and US DOC National Marine Fisheries Service under the activity for Fish Passage Restoration. NMFS NWP-2013-9664; FWS OIEOFW00-20 I 3-F-0090.

2.1.3. Wildlife Resources

- Prohibit garbage or trash from being left in the project area.
- Heavy equipment and other activities generating noise above ambient levels, and occurring from April 1 through September 5 would occur between two hours after sunrise to two hours before sunset.
- Project will be consistent with conservation measures outlined in MBS Forest Programmatic BO (FWS Reference Number 1-3-02-F-1583, pp. 32-35) and summarized in the "SF Stilly Restoration BA Documents" document included in the project record.

2.1.4. Recreation and Visual Quality

- Appropriate public safety measures will be in place during construction.

2.1.5. Heritage Resources

- Conduct cultural resource surveys prior to implementing ground-disturbing activities.
- Complete section 106 compliance prior to project implementation.
- Until proper evaluation occurs, all known cultural resource properties shall be protected
- If a previously unidentified cultural resource is discovered during project implementation, the activity shall be stopped in the area of the find and a reasonable effort to secure and protect the resource be made. The Heritage Specialist shall be notified, and the Forest would fulfill its responsibilities in accordance with the Programmatic Agreement and other applicable regulations.
- If human remains are discovered, all work must stop in the area of the discovery and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act protocols followed.

3. Tribal Consultation

I notified the Stillaguamish, Tulalip, and Sauk-Suiattle Tribes of the proposed project by mail. The Tulalip Tribes responded with a letter supporting the proposed action and acknowledging that the project would improve habitat factors known to limit Chinook salmon production in the Stillaguamish watershed. The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe responded with confirmation of their interest in participating as a consulting party with respect to historic and cultural resources and requesting copies of archaeological surveys and reviews for the project. The Squaxin Island Tribe Cultural Resources Department confirmed by email that the project is outside the Squaxin Island Tribe's traditional area and no further consultation with them is needed.

4. Public Involvement

I emailed project notification letters to the Forest-wide mailing list (1,374 recipients) on November 7, 2019. Four comments were received in response to this notification. Two of the comments requested additional information about the project. One of the comments expressed support for the proposal and requested that the effects of not taking action be considered. One comment from the City of Arlington Public Works Department also expressed strong support for the sediment reduction objectives of the project and asked that the project be reviewed by experts in fluvial geomorphology, that standard Best Management Practices be implemented, that monitoring and adaptive management allow for additional site stabilization measures for up to three years following construction and that the City be kept informed during project implementation.

5. Extraordinary Circumstances Review

Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1090 15, Section 31.2 (36 CFR 220.6) identifies the following resource conditions that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to a proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an EIS or EA. An interdisciplinary team reviewed the proposed project and analyzed the potential for effects from project activities. Site-specific conditions were reviewed in the field, and office-records were searched to determine if the potential effects on resources would result in any extraordinary circumstances. The mere presence of a "resource condition" does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion. Rather, "it is the existence of a cause-effect relationship between a proposed action and the potential effect on these resource conditions, and if such a relationship exists, the degree of the potential effect of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist" (36 CFR 220.6 (b) (2)).

- a) **Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species**

The project was analyzed to determine effects on federally listed threatened or endangered species (TES), designated critical habitat, species proposed for federal listing or proposed or designated critical habitat, Forest Service Sensitive species known or suspected of occurring on the Forest, and Forest Management Indicator species.

Wildlife:

Federally listed Threatened and Endangered (TE) Species

Project activities would have no effect on the grizzly bear and gray wolf due to high human presence in the area. Project activities are likely to adversely affect northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet

and their designated critical habitats due to habitat removal and noise disturbance from the staging and construction activities associated with project implementation. See January 2020 BE/BA Documentation and Wildlife Specialist Report, Biological Assessment and Project Consistency Evaluation Form in project record.

Species	Status	Preferred Habitat	Suitable Habitat in the Project Area	*Determination for Proposed Action
Gray wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	Endangered/ MIS**	Security habitat > 300 m from road, ungulate prey base	No	No Effect
Marbled murrelet (<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus m.</i>)	Threatened	Mature, old-growth forests (nesting, roosting)	Yes	LAA
Marbled murrelet Critical Habitat	Designated	Mature conifer trees with nesting platforms and trees within ½ mile	Yes	LAA
Northern spotted owl (<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>)	Threatened/ MIS	Mature, old-growth forests (nesting, roosting, foraging); second-growth used for dispersal	Yes	LAA
Northern spotted owl Critical Habitat	Designated	Conifer forest providing nesting, roosting, foraging, and dispersal habitat	Yes	LAA
Grizzly bear (<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>)	Threatened/ MIS	Security habitat > 300 m from road	No	No Effect

* NE = No effect; NLAA = May affect but is not likely to adversely affect; LAA = May affect and is likely to adversely affect the species or its designated critical habitat.

**MIS = Management Indicator Species

Forest Service Region 6 Sensitive Species

There is no suitable habitat or known sites for the bald eagle, common loon, Larch Mountain salamander, Van Dyke's salamander, mountain goat, wolverine, giant Palouse earthworm, Melissa arctic, valley silverspot, and Cascade fox in or adjacent to the project area that could be impacted by the project. Consequently, no effect will occur to these species.

The Harlequin duck, goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, Puget Oregonian, broadwhorl tightcoil, shiny tightcoil, Beller's ground beetle, western bumblebee, Suckley cuckoo bumblebee, Johnson's hairstreak, and little brown myotis are not known to occur in the project area but may be present due to presence of potentially suitable habitat. Project activities affecting habitat and creating disturbance due to noise and human presence may impact individuals but are not likely to create a trend towards federal listing.

Fisheries:

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (MBS NF), and effect determinations for project level analysis for the proposed SF Stillaguamish Riparian and Floodplain Enhancement Project are summarized in the table below. There are no designated Regional Foresters Sensitive Species on the MBS NF.

Species	Status	Known to Occur in the Project Area	Suitable Habitat in the Project Area	*Determination for Proposed Action
Puget Sound Chinook Salmon (<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>)	Threatened	Yes	Yes	LAA
Puget Sound Steelhead Trout (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>)	Threatened	Yes	Yes	LAA
Bull Trout (<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>)	Threatened	Yes	Yes	LAA

* NE = No effect; NLAA = May affect but is not likely to adversely affect; LAA = May affect and is likely to adversely affect the species or its designated critical habitat.

In addition, the project may affect and is likely to adversely affect the species and its designated critical habitat for chinook salmon, steelhead trout and bull trout. Formal ESA consultation will follow ARBO II procedures and design criteria. The project will adversely affect coho salmon, pink salmon and chinook salmon Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). All adverse effects are result of project construction elements: dewatering, fish salvage and sediment turbidity. All effects from this project are covered in ARBO II.

Botany: No federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species are known to occur within the MBS. There are three species on the Regional Forester’s Sensitive Plant List (dated February 25, 2019) for the Pacific Northwest Region, with potential suitable habitat in the project area: *Leptogium cyanescens*, *Bartramiopsis lescurii*, and *Ramalina thrausta*. These three species are not known to occur in the project area but may be present due to potentially suitable habitat. Project activities affecting habitat may impact individuals but are not likely to create a trend towards federal listing. See January 2020 Botany Specialist Report.

b) Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds

Project will not further change nor will it degrade watershed scale features necessary to conserve and protect elements of aquatic ecosystems. Project will restore riparian and floodplain processes by reclaiming the area currently encroached upon by the campground. Project will maintain existing spatial and temporal connectivity in the watersheds. The project will maintain water quality within the localized range by providing for stream bank and floodplain stability (instream structural and riparian planting components). This will also occur during construction via BMPs and other related practices. See January 17, 2020 Aquatic Resource Effects Biological Evaluation.

c) Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas

The project does not occur in any Congressionally designated area.

d) Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas

The project does not occur in an Inventoried Roadless Area.

e) Research Natural Areas

The project is not situated in or near a Research Natural Area.

f) American Indians and Alaska native religious or cultural sites

The project will not adversely affect any known American Indian religious or cultural sacred sites. The Federal government has trust responsibilities to Tribes under a government-to-government

relationship to ensure that the Tribes' reserved rights are protected. Consultation with Tribes helps ensure that these trust responsibilities are met. See section 3 regarding communication with Tribes.

g) Archaeological sites or historic properties or areas

No previously recorded historic properties are present in the vicinity of the project and no historic properties, structures, archaeological sites or isolated artifacts, cultural materials or culturally modified trees were identified during the inventory for the project.

6. Reason for Categorically Excluding this Project

Based on a review of the expected impacts and consultation with District and Forest resource specialists, I have determined that this project is categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA) because there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and the action is within a category identified by regulation. 36 CFR 220.6(a).

- Based on a review of the potential effects of the project on resource conditions identified in section 4, there are no extraordinary circumstances that might cause this action to have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively.
- The category for this action is 36 CFR 220.6(e)(18): *Restoring wetlands, streams, riparian areas or other water bodies by removing, replacing, or modifying water control structures such as, but not limited to, dams, levees, dikes, ditches, culvers, pipes, drainage tiles, valves, gates, and fencing, to allow waters to flow into natural channels and floodplains and restore natural flow regimes to the extent practicable where valid existing rights or special use authorizations are not unilaterally altered or cancelled.*

7. Findings Required By Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the 1990 Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the April 13, 1994 Record of Decision for Management of Habitat for Late Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. An extraordinary circumstances review documented that the project will comply with other applicable laws or regulations.

National Forest Management Act of 1976: As required by 36 CFR 219.8(e), this decision is consistent with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended. See paragraphs below regarding consistency with the Forest Plan.

Management direction for the proposed project is provided by the 1990 Record of Decision for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Land and Resource Management Plan "Forest Plan," as amended. Amendments to the Forest Plan include the 1994 Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl "Northwest Forest Plan."

The project is within Management Allocation 5BLSR: 5B Recommended Scenic Rivers, Late Successional Reserve (LSR) and unmapped Riparian Reserve.

Northwest Forest Plan Aquatic Conservation Strategy:

The project area is within a Tier 1 Key Watershed, as described in the Northwest Forest Plan. Tier 1 Key Watersheds were selected for directly contributing to anadromous salmonid and bull trout conservation and key watersheds are the highest priority for restoration.

The project would occur within riparian reserves as they are defined in the Northwest Forest Plan. Riparian Reserves are portions of watersheds where riparian-dependent resources receive primary emphasis and where special stands and guidelines apply. Standards and guidelines for Riparian Reserves prohibit or regulate activities in Riparian Reserves that retard or prevent attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives. Relevant to the proposed project, standards and guidelines direct that existing recreation facilities within Riparian Reserves be evaluated and impacts mitigated to ensure they do not prevent, and to the extent practical, contribute to attainment of ACS objectives. Developed recreation practices that slow or prevent attainment of ACS objectives should be adjusted where necessary.

ACS Objectives and Project Level Consistency:

- 1. Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations and communities are uniquely adapted.*

Project will not further change nor will it degrade watershed scale features necessary to conserve and protect elements of aquatic ecosystems. Project will restore riparian and floodplain processes by reclaiming the area currently encroached upon by the campground.

- 2. Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal, and drainage network connections include floodplains, wetlands, upslope areas, headwater tributaries, and intact refugia. These network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.*

Project will maintain existing spatial and temporal connectivity in the watersheds.

- 3. Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations.*

The project will provide natural stabilization of stream banks within the newly constructed channel.

- 4. Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems. Water quality must remain within the range that maintains the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of the system and benefits survival, growth, reproduction, and migration of individuals composing aquatic and riparian communities.*

The project will maintain water quality within the localized range by providing for stream bank and floodplain stability (instream structural and riparian planting components). This will also occur during construction via BMPs and other related practices.

- 5. Maintain and restore sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. Elements of the sediment regime include the timing, volume, rate, and character of sediment input, storage, and transport.*

The project will maintain sediment regimes by providing for stream bank and floodplain stability (instream structural and riparian planting components). This will also occur during construction via BMPs and other related practices.

6. *Maintain and restore in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats and to retain patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing. The timing magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high, and low flows must be protected*

The project maintains in-stream flows in the newly constructed channel which will be designed to naturally route sediment and related debris and access floodplain area servicing a spectrum of high flows.

7. *Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.*

The project will not impact wetlands or meadows. Expected post-project conditions will however result in wetland type function due to localized water retaining capability.

8. *Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.*

The project will maintain overall riparian plant communities. In the localized project area there will be a net loss of large conifer trees within the riparian zone due to the new channel construction. Post-project conditions (post-riparian planting) will be early serial riparian habitat composed mostly of alder and willow with grass/forb understory. It's expected that natural recruitment of conifers will occur over time as post-construction conditions develop.

9. *Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.*

The project will enhance aquatic habitat conditions for chinook salmon and other native fishes. As the area recovers post-construction riparian related habitat conditions supporting plant and wildlife species will improve but will be in an early serial condition for an estimated 20-30 years.

Northwest Forest Plan Late Successional Reserve Allocation

The LSR standard and guideline for “habitat improvements projects” (standards and guidelines at C-17) directs that “projects designed to improve conditions for fish, wildlife, or watersheds should be considered if they provide late-successional habitat benefits or if their effect on late-successional associated species is negligible. Projects required for recovery of threatened or endangered species should be considered even if they result in some reduction of habitat quality for other late-successional species. For example, watershed rehabilitation projects such as felling trees along streams, will be coordinated with a wildlife biologist and may include seasonal restrictions. Design and implement watershed restoration projects in a manner that is consistent with Late-Successional Reserve objectives.”

This is a fish habitat improvement project, that will remove some large trees (estimated 30 large diameter trees and many small diameter trees) within LSR but it is within a developed campground and will replace a paved road and campsites with aquatic and riparian habitat that will benefit fish

and other aquatic and riparian species. Because of the developed condition of the campground, effects on late-successional associated species will be negligible and the project is consistent with LSR standards and guidelines.

Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage Guidelines

This project would utilize one of the four categories of projects identified in Judge Pechman's stipulation and order (10/10/2006). This project is exempt from pre-disturbance species surveys under the following category:

- (c) Riparian and stream improvement projects where the riparian work is riparian planting, obtaining material for placing in-stream, and road or trail decommissioning; and where the stream improvement work is the placement large [sic] wood, channel and floodplain reconstruction, or removal of channel diversions.

While pre-disturbance species surveys are exempted, there is a known S&M Category A species within the campground. *Tetraphis moss (Tetraphis geniculata)* is found growing on decayed logs and stumps and known location (site id: 06050200088) is within the campground but outside of the proposed affected area.

MBS Forest Plan 5B Recommended Scenic Rivers Allocation

The segment of the SF Stillaguamish River within the project area (Headwaters to Canyon Creek Confluence) was recommended to be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and classified as a Scenic River in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP FEIS, Appendix E). The values contributing to the proposed designation were identified as scenery, recreation, fish, wildlife, historical, and ecological "outstandingly remarkable values." The Forest Plan direction is to maintain or enhance these outstanding and remarkable values so that the SF Stillaguamish River's eligibility is not compromised (USDA Forest Service 1990, p. 4-30). This decision will not impact eligibility of the SF Stillaguamish River for future designation and is consistent with the Forest Plan.

National Historic Preservation Act and Archaeological Resources Protection Act: My decision complies with these Acts. See sections 4(f) and 4(g). See January 13, 2020 documentation of National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance and January 2020 Heritage Specialist Report.

Clean Water Act: My decision complies with this Act. The project will not further degrade or cause listing of waterbodies under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Floodplains, wetlands, and municipal watersheds are discussed under the Extraordinary Circumstances review section. See also January 17, 2020 Aquatic Resource Effects – Biological Evaluation.

Endangered Species Act: My decision complies with this Act. For effects findings on threatened or endangered species, see section 4(a).

Fish: The MBS Forest Fish Biologist reviewed the proposed actions. Effects determinations are summarized above under the discussion of extraordinary circumstances. Project actions and effects determinations are consistent with the 2013 Programmatic ESA consultation Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinions (ARBO II) from FWS and NMFS under the activity for *channel reconstruction* activity type. 2013 Programmatic ESA consultation Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinions (ARBO II) from US Fish and Wildlife Service and US DOC National Marine Fisheries Service under the activity for Fish Passage Restoration. NMFS NWP-2013-9664; FWS OIEOFW00-20 I 3-F-0090.

Consistent with implementing ARBO II, the Regional Design Assistant Team (DAT) will complete technical review of the site and provide any recommendations related to design consistency with ARBO II. See March 2020 Technical Design Report for Regional Review Team and documentation of National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence in project record. Also consistent with implementing ARBO II, a pre-project notification for each site prior to commencement of construction activities will be submitted via the US Forest Service Aquatic Restoration Regulatory Reporting System (ARRRS). A post-project notification record will also be submitted upon the conclusion of construction activities in ARRRS.

Wildlife: The MBS Forest Wildlife Biologist reviewed the proposed actions. Effects determinations are summarized above under the discussion of extraordinary circumstances. US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with Forest Service determination that the SF Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Project is consistent with the current Programmatic Consultations for Forest Activities between USFWS and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (USFWS 2002, USFWS 2004) as extended and revised on December 18, 2007, and extended on March 23, 2010. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2002. Biological Opinion of the Effects of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Program of Activities for 2003-2007 on Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owls. Western Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, Lacey, Washington. FWS Reference Number 1-3-02-F-1583.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act—The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA), as amended, was established to protect migratory birds. This act makes it illegal to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or possess migratory birds or any part nest, or egg of any such bird (16 U.S.C. 703-7012). In January of 2001 an Executive Order 13186 was issued on the Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds. It specifies the need to avoid or minimize any adverse impacts on migratory birds. The order addressed the need to restore and enhance the habitat of migratory birds. This project and decision are consistent with the MBTA. The proposed project will impact some riparian and mature conifer forest. Birds which use these habitats would be locally impacted, but migratory or landbird populations on the Forest are not expected to be adversely affected.

In accordance with **Executive Order 12898**, this project will not result in any disproportionate impact to minority or low-income populations.

Executive Order 13751 amends Executive Order 13112 and directs actions to continue coordinated Federal prevention and control efforts related to invasive species. Common hawkweed (*Hieracium lachenalii*) is distributed throughout the Gold Basin campground (site id: 06050200254). Management requirements are in place to limit the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive plants. Prevention measures to limit the introduction of invasive plants include the requirement to clean all equipment before coming on the forest, the use of weed-free gravel and fill, etc. Measures in place to reduce the spread of existing occurrences include the requirement to work from a weed-free area first before moving into infested areas. Only those roads and rock pits/sources in which ground-disturbing activities would occur require pre-implementation treatments. These measures are unlikely to contain all existing infestations.

Project implementation is consistent with other Federal, State, and local laws for the protection of the environment.

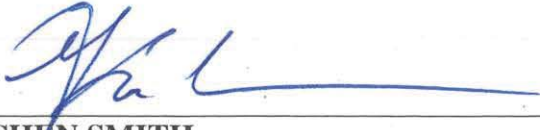
8. Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal. On February 7, 2014, the President signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, Public. Law No. 113-79 (i.e., Farm Bill). Section 8006(a) of the

2014 Farm Bill repealed the Appeals Reform Act, Public Law No. 102-381, 106 Stat. 1419 (1992). Section 8006(b) directs that the pre-decisional objection process established in Section 428 of division E of the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2012, Public Law No. 112-74, shall not be applicable to categorically excluded projects or activities.

9. Implementation

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately following the date of this Decision Memo.



GRETCHEN SMITH

District Ranger

Darrington Ranger District

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

30 Sept 2020

Date

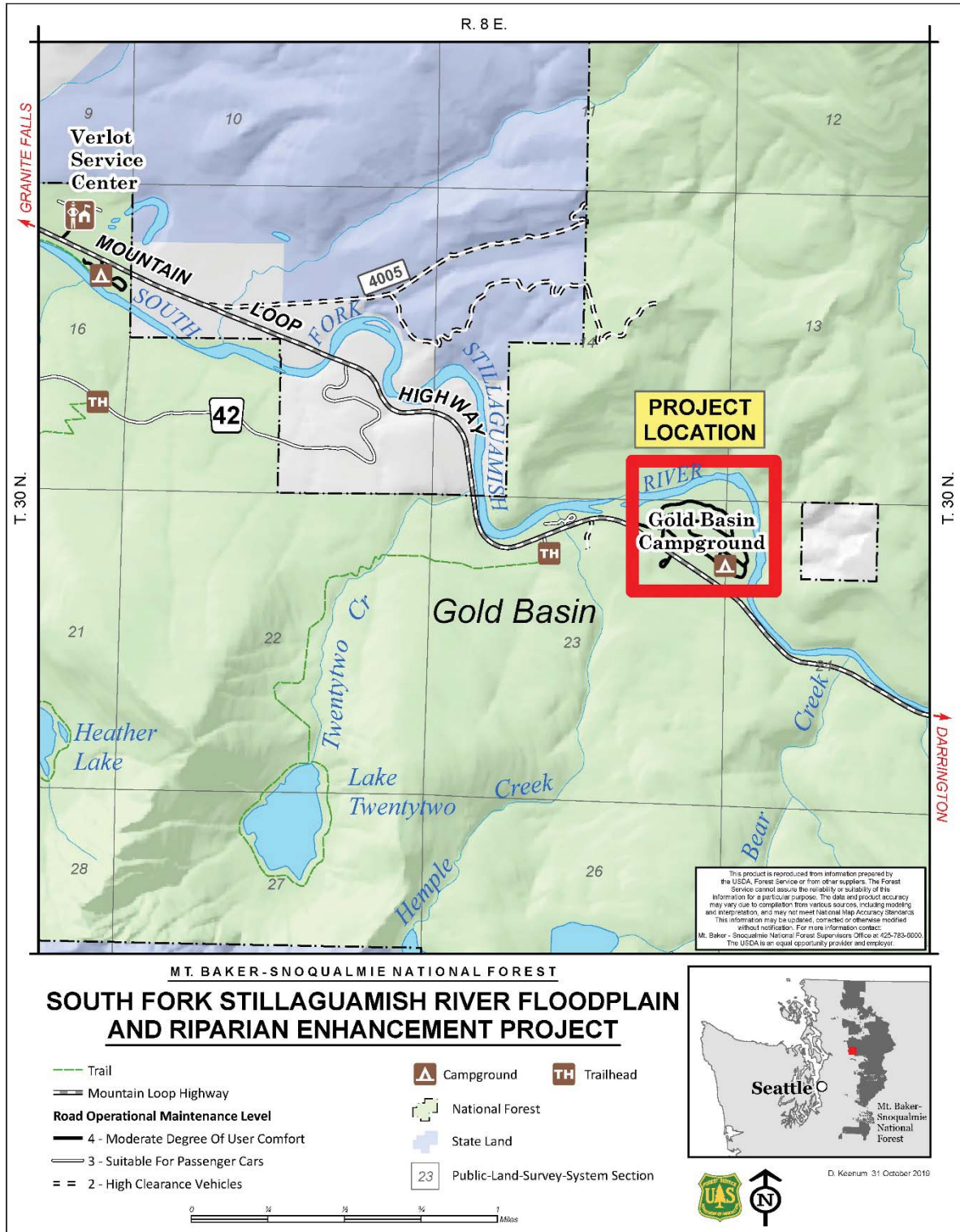


Figure 1. SF Stillaguamish Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement Project Area Map.



Figure 2. Landslide deposit at the base of lobe 2 of the Gold Basin Slide and in the SF Stillaguamish River.



Figure 3. Sediment deposited by the Gold Basin Slide is visible in the river adjacent to and downstream from the slide.



Figure 4. Gold Basin Campground campsite adjacent to the S.F. Stillaguamish River.



Figure 5. Remnant side channel that runs through a portion of the Gold Basin Campground.



Figure 6. Eroding bank below a campsite within the Gold Basin Campground. The river reroute will start (upstream extent) through this portion of the campground.