



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS) AND ADOPTION OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT (ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)

Name of Proposal: DNS/Adoption 21-032: MISSION PROJECT WOOD AMENDMENT

Description of Proposal:

The objective of the Mission Project Wood Amendment project is to use streamside felling to increase cover and instream complexity and encourage formation of pools in 8 miles of Libby and Buttermilk creeks in the Methow River watershed. USFS aquatic habitat surveys identified that small to large sized wood levels are below desired amounts in reaches where spawning and rearing occurs. Currently, steelhead spawn and rear in Buttermilk Creek (major spawning area) and Libby Creek (minor spawning area), and bull trout spawn and rear in East and West Fork Buttermilk Creek. Past riparian harvest limited potential for natural wood recruitment and the USFS identified the need to add wood to increase pool habitat, fish cover, and spawning gravel in the Mission Project. This project will fell a total of 128 streamside trees directly into 8 miles of stream between the two basins. Wood will increase cover and instream complexity and encourage the development of pools and the aggradation of spawning gravels in reaches used for both spawning and rearing of ESA-listed fish.

The wood amendment project would take place in Libby Creek (tributary to the Methow River) and Buttermilk Creek (tributary to the Twisp River) (Figures 1-3). Both basins have experienced many decades of timber harvest, fire suppression, livestock grazing, firewood cutting, recreation impacts, and road construction. Through the Mission Project, the Methow Ranger District identified, developed, and completed NEPA for aquatic restoration projects in these tributaries. This proposal covers all the instream wood addition work identified through the Mission Project. The proposed treatment is to fell dead and live trees into key locations in stream reaches. All wood would be individually identified for use and directionally felled by chainsaw in locations to interact with the channels. Tree species include Douglas fir, spruce, and ponderosa pine.

Site	Specific location	mi	# trees	Size	Description
Buttermilk	0.8 to NF/SF confluence	1.8	50	S-L	up to 20 trees 12-20 dbh, up to 30 trees 6-12 dbh
WF Buttermilk	Buttermilk confluence to 550 rd	1.8	10	S-M	up to 10 trees 12-20 dbh
WF Buttermilk	.5mi above 550rd to wilderness	1.2	4	L	up to 4 trees 18-20 dbh
Black Pine	Confluence with EF to 2nd 43 rd xing	1.4	30	S-M	up to 30 trees 6-12 dbh
Libby	.45mi below Ben Cr confluence to NF/SF confluence	1	30	S-M	up to 10 trees 12-20 dbh, up to 20 trees 6-12 dbh
NF Libby	SF confluence to 43 rd xing	0.8	4	L	up to 4 trees 18-20 db

Proponent/Applicant: Cascade Fisheries
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Location of Proposal: Libby and Buttermilk Creeks in the Methow River watershed, within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, south and west of Twisp, Okanogan County, Washington:

Township	Range	Section
32N	20E	4, 42
	21E	16, 17, 20, 21
33N	20E	15, 22, 23, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36, 44, 55, 56, 57

*Note that section, township, and range designation may vary depending on which mapping tool and layer are used.

Title of Document being Adopted: Final Environmental Assessment titled, “Mission Restoration Project” with Final Decision Notice for that Environmental Assessment, which together make up the Environmental Assessment.

Agency that Prepared Document Being Adopted: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Date Adopted Document was Prepared: Environmental Assessment dated March 2018 and Decision Notice dated July 20, 2018.

Description of Document (or Portion) Being Adopted: The portion of the Environmental Assessment that covers the wood amendment projects in Libby and Buttermilk Creeks: mainly sections 3.3.1, 3.3.3, and 3.3.4; and Appendices C and D.

If the Document Being Adopted has been Challenged, Please Describe: N/A

Name of Agency Adopting the Document: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

The Document is Available to be Read at:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife - Natural Resources Building,
1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA, Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. (Note: the office is temporarily closed)

This document is also available for review online at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments> and http://data.ecosystem-management.org/nepaweb/nepa_project_exp.php?project=49201 (under “Analysis” tab)

Adoption of Existing Environmental Document: After independent review, we have identified and adopted the referenced document as being appropriate for this proposal. The document meets our environmental review needs for the current proposal and will accompany the proposal to the decision maker.

We issued this Determination of Nonsignificance/Adoption Notice under WAC 197-11-340(2), WAC 197-11-610, and WAC 197-11-630. 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 21, 2021**.

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: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

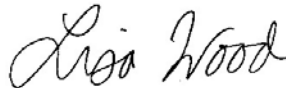
Position/Title: SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division

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: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/closed-final>. 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/Adoption or the details of the proposal, contact Lisa Wood at the address above or email SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov.

DATE OF ISSUE: July 7, 2021 **SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)

SEPA Log Number: 21-032.dns/adpt

Individuals who need to receive this information in an alternative format or language, or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact the Title VI/ADA Compliance Coordinator by phone at 360-902-2349, TTY (711), or email (Title6@dfw.wa.gov).