



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 22-010: WINDY POINT COMMERCIAL THIN – PHASE 1

Description of Proposal:

The Windy Point Commercial Thin is intended to improve the ecological integrity of the forest landscape, benefitting multiple wildlife species and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. This will be achieved by increasing the relative abundance of fire & drought resistant trees like ponderosa pine & western larch, reducing fuel load and connectivity to overstory trees, and increasing cover of native understory vegetation. All units in Phase 1 may have prescribed fire applied within 1 to 5 years after thinning.

Approximately 349 acres across 3 units will be commercially thinned in stands where the overstory is 60 to 80 years old. Current stand composition is variable across the project area that starts at 2,400 feet elevation and ends at 4,400 feet elevation. Lower elevations contain ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir & scattered Oregon white oaks, while higher elevations have more western larch, grand fir and Oregon white oak is absent. Patches of conifer regeneration 5 to 25 years old and areas of open grass/shrubland are scattered within the forest landscape. Moderate levels of conifer slash less-than (<) 8 inches diameter are still present from past thinning, particularly in closed-canopy Douglas-fir stands. Stands will be thinned using the “Individuals, Clumps & Openings” (ICO) Strategy to provide a variety of habitat conditions for wildlife (see attached prescription for details).

In order to facilitate thinning operations, this project will include approximately 25,945 feet (4.91 miles) of road maintenance along the FS-1302 & FS-1302-511 roads, 3,988 feet (0.76 miles) of new temporary road construction, and 1,120 feet (0.29 miles) of road rerouting. When the units are prepared for prescribed fire implementation, these same roads may be utilized as fire breaks along with the construction of an additional 36,265 feet (6.86 miles) of fire breaks around the unit perimeters. Constructed fire breaks would be a 24 inch trench dug to the upper level of mineral soil (ie, removing all organic material). Fire lines may be constructed by either heavy equipment or handcrews as needed.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: The WDFW Oak Creek Wildlife Area, approximately 10 miles east of Rimrock Lake and 10 miles west of Naches, Yakima County, Washington: Township 14N, Range 15E, Sections 23 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 law¹ 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.² **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 February 17, 2022.**

Method of Comment:

SEPA documents related to this proposal can be reviewed at the WDFW SEPA website at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments>.

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 through one of the following ways:

- Online at the Public Input comment portal for this proposal: <https://publicinput.com/WindyPointThinPhase1>
- Email to: WindyPointThinPhase1@PublicInput.com

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 or the details of the proposal, or have difficulty with the Public Input comment portal, contact Lisa Wood at: SEPADesk2@dfw.wa.gov.

DATE OF ISSUE: February 3, 2022

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 22-010.dns

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).