

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. **You may use “not applicable” or “does not apply” only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown.** You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to **all parts of your proposal**, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for lead agencies

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B, plus the [Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions \(Part D\)](#). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in “Part B: Environmental Elements” that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [Find help answering background questions](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

WDFW and Tribal Co-Manager Hatchery Policy

2. Name of applicant:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St. SE
Olympia WA, 98501
360-902-2595
Contact Person: Kenneth Warheit

4. Date checklist prepared:

April 17, 2023

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

If approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) and at least one Tribal Co-Manager, the policy will take effect in the applicable geographic region of the state (see #11 below) at the time when both parties have approved and signed the policy. After approval by the FWC and until at least one Tribal Co-Manager signs the policy, the controlling hatchery policy for Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) continues to be the FWC's Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Policy ([Policy C-3624](#)). Policy C-3624 will continue to be the hatchery policy for WDFW for hatchery programs in geographic regions where there isn't at least one Tribal Co-Manager that has signed the policy.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Yes, there are further activities connected to this proposal. This proposal concerns a policy between FWC, on behalf of the WDFW, and Tribal Co-Managers. As discussed in #11 below this policy is a nonproject action that commits WDFW and Tribal Co-Managers to collectively abide by stated high-level principles as they engage in ongoing and future planning for individual hatchery programs, as discussed in the full text of the policy (see Appendix) and in #11 below. Many of the individual plans will require or have required the

development of Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs), which go through NEPA review by NOAA Fisheries and sometimes USFWS. All WDFW hatchery program plans associated with this proposal will go through NEPA and/or SEPA review as appropriate.

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

No environmental information has been prepared as a direct result of this proposal. However, since this proposal is a nonproject action that directs the development of a series of connected actions of narrow scope (see #11 below), and those connected actions are current or future hatchery program plans, environmental information has been prepared directly associated with existing hatchery program plans. For ESA-listed species the existing hatchery program plans are the HGMPs that are submitted to NOAA Fisheries and sometimes USFWS for their ESA consultation and NEPA evaluations of the environmental effects of the hatchery programs.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

As discussed in #7 and #8 above, this proposal is a nonproject action that guides the development of a series of connected actions of narrow scope in a phased SEPA review (see #11 below). This proposal is the first phase of the SEPA review, and there are no pending applications for governmental approval directly associated with this proposal. The second phase of this SEPA review is the series of actions that are connected to this proposal – actions which involve updates to or adoptions of specific HGMPs or hatchery management plans. Although those actions are not the subject of this phase of the SEPA review, those actions will require their own environmental evaluations. Many of those connected actions concern hatchery production with potential environmental effects to ESA-listed species. For these hatchery programs, WDFW develops HGMPs that are submitted to NOAA Fisheries and sometimes USFWS for their NEPA evaluations of the potential environmental effects. WDFW runs approximately 172 anadromous salmon and steelhead hatchery programs, approximately 121 of these programs require the development of HGMPs. Although many of these HGMPs are linked to this proposal (see #11 below), they have been developed independently of the proposal, and are wholly consistent with the proposal. Since 2014, WDFW has submitted to NOAA Fisheries HGMPs for each of these 121 programs, and has received approval for 72 programs.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

There are no government approvals or permits that are required for this proposal. See #9 above.

11. Give a brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on

this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

This proposal concerns a draft policy between Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) on behalf of WDFW, and Tribal Co-Managers on the management of anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries in Washington State. The full content of this draft proposal is attached. We provide here a summary of the Purpose, Scope, and Principles of the policy.

Purpose: Establishes expectations for collaborative management of tribal and WDFW salmon and steelhead hatchery programs in Washington State.

Scope of the Policy: The policy becomes active once the FWC approves the policy and at least one Tribal Co-Manager signs the policy. It is possible that not all Tribal Co-managers will sign the policy. Therefore, this policy applies to those anadromous salmon and steelhead hatchery programs operated by WDFW and Tribal Co-Managers in the geographic areas associated with the specific Tribal Co-Managers that are signatories to this policy. For those hatchery programs that fall under this Co-Manager Hatchery Policy, this policy will supersede all elements of the FWC's Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Policy (Policy C-3624). All other hatchery programs will be operated based on existing legal requirements and C-3624.

Principle 1: Co-Managers acknowledge and re-commit to follow all court orders and management agreements arising under U.S. v. Washington, Hoh Indian Tribe v. Baldrige, and U.S. v. Oregon pertaining to salmonid hatchery operations and management.

Principle 2: Hatchery fish support Treaty Right fishing obligations that cannot be provided by natural-origin salmonid populations alone.

Principle 3. Hatcheries produce fish for state-regulated recreational and commercial fishing opportunities beyond that provided by natural-origin salmonid populations.

Principle 4. The Co-Managers will develop and/or operate in accordance with hatchery program plans that include clearly-defined hatchery goals and describe hatchery operations at the regional and/or watershed level. The hatchery plans should indicate how the hatchery production is integrated with habitat, hydropower, and harvest. Hatchery program plans should: (1) support ecosystem function; (2) consider how natural-origin salmonids support ecosystem function; (3) consider how hatchery production can contribute to productive natural-spawning populations that are locally adaptive and diverse genetically; (4) consider how hatchery operations can maintain or enhance the genetic diversity and adaptability of hatchery broodstock; and (5) include program goals that strive to balance harvest opportunities, cultural, economic, conservation, and ecological benefits with potential genetic and ecological risks to natural-origin salmonid populations, while considering current environmental conditions.

Principle 5: Hatcheries are to be designed and operated in a scientifically-sound and defensible manner, including adaptive management processes for informing decisions that include monitoring, evaluation, and research programs.

Principle 6: Co-Managers shall work to secure adequate financial resources to meet current and future challenges to the successful use of salmonid hatcheries in accomplishing the purpose of this Policy. This includes planning for the negative effects of climate change on salmonid survival and the resources needed to support them.

This proposal fits the definition of a nonproject action that governs the development of a series of connected actions (WAC 197-11-704(2)(b)(iii)). The series of connected actions is the management of specific hatchery programs. Since this proposal concerns a nonproject, WDFW considers this SEPA review as a phased review; the sequence of the review process moving from this nonspecific nonproject policy to future documents of narrower scope (WAC 197-11-060(5)(c)(i)). The documents of narrower scope are specific hatchery program plans (see Principle 4 above), which themselves will be subjected to a NEPA and/or SEPA review process.

12. Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

If the WDFW and Tribal Co-Manager Hatchery Policy (this proposal) is approved by the FWC and at least one Tribal Co-Manager, the policy will take effect in the applicable geographic region of the state (see #11 above) at the time when both parties have approved and signed the policy. As additional Tribal Co-Managers sign the policy, the geographic scope of the policy will increase. FWC's Anadromous Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Policy (Policy C-3624) will continue to be the hatchery policy for WDFW for hatchery programs in geographic regions where there is not at least one Tribal Co-Manager that has signed the policy (see #6 and #11 above). If all Tribal Co-Managers sign the Co-Manager Hatchery Policy, the policy would be applied broadly throughout Washington State.

B. Environmental Elements

Under WACs 197-11-315(1)(e) and 197-11-960, WDFW as SEPA lead agency has determined that the questions in Part B do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of this nonproject proposal and has omitted them. Part D is the responsive section describing the environmental effects of this proposal.

C. Signature [Find help about who should sign](#)

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

4/17/2023

X Kenneth I. Warheit

Signed by: Warheit, Kenneth I (DFW)

Type name of signee: Kenneth I. Warheit

Position and agency/organization: Supervisor, Genetic and Health Laboratories, WDFW

Date submitted: 4/17/2023

D. Supplemental sheet for nonproject actions [Find help for the nonproject actions worksheet](#)

IT IS NOT REQUIRED to use this section for project actions.

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment.

When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal, or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

Introduction:

This proposal is a draft policy between the between the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) on behalf of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and Tribal Co-Managers on the management of anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries in Washington State. This policy establishes the Co-Managers' expectations for collaborative management of Tribal and WDFW salmon and steelhead hatchery programs. The policy also includes a series of principles that outline the Co-Managers' values with respect to the operations of anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries in Washington State. *This policy does not establish specific hatchery goals, and makes no statement as to whether current hatchery production levels are to remain the same, or be increased or decreased.*

This current SEPA review is the first part of a phased review process that moves from this nonspecific nonproject policy to documents of narrow scope (see #11 above). The documents of narrower scope are the specific hatchery program plans. Many of the hatchery program plans are, or will be, in the form of Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) that are submitted to NOAA Fisheries and sometimes USFWS for their NEPA evaluations of the potential environmental effects (see #8 and #9 above). All hatchery program plans associated with this proposal will undergo an environmental assessment, NEPA and/or SEPA, as appropriate. *This current SEPA Checklist and the associated environmental review is limited to the policy itself and not the hatchery program plans.*

1. How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

This proposal will not result in any change to discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise, which may be associated with current practices at WDFW anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries. Water discharge from WDFW hatchery facilities that are required to operate under NPDES permits are regulated by the Washington Department of Ecology.

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are: NA**

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Hatchery production can be a hazard (something that can causes harm) to natural-origin (“wild”) populations of salmonids. The hazard can negatively affect natural-origin salmonid populations through ecological or genetic interactions. These effects may be mitigated through specific hatchery management practices such as sizing hatchery programs and timing hatchery releases appropriately, considering the ecosystem into which hatchery fish will be released. Actual hatchery production and specific hatchery management practices are subjects of hatchery program plans and are therefore *not the subject of this SEPA review* (see Introduction above). *This SEPA review concerns a set of Co-Manager values* (e.g., policy principles), which will be used, in part to establish or update the goals that are imbedded into the hatchery program plans. Values themselves cannot directly affect salmonids or other biota. Therefore, this proposal will not *directly* “affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life.” Nevertheless, since these values are intended to guide specific hatchery program goals, they can indirectly affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life, particularly, natural-origin salmonid populations.

The primary values expressed in this proposal are:

- WDFW and Tribal Co-Managers will work collaboratively to manage anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries,
- Hatcheries are primarily operated to preserve, reintroduce, or supplement natural production,
- Hatchery programs help support Tribal Treaty Rights, especially when natural-origin populations are insufficient to sustain Tribal harvest,
- State-regulated recreational and commercial fishing opportunities are important culturally and economically to Washington State,
- Hatcheries are best managed locally at the regional or watershed level,
- Hatcheries should be managed in ways that would reduce or mitigate their risks to natural-origin populations (e.g., sized appropriately, local adaptation, diverse genetically),
- Hatchery benefits and risks must be considered when establishing hatchery program goals, and
- Hatcheries are operated in a scientifically-sound and defensible manner using adaptive management to achieve hatchery program goals.

These values can indirectly and negatively affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life, particularly salmonids, if they are construed to mean that hatchery production is a priority and protection of the natural-origin populations is of secondary concern. However, these values prioritize neither hatchery– nor natural–production, and allow local knowledge of ecosystems to determine how best to operate hatcheries. For systems that include ESA-listed biota hatchery operations are constrained by the requirements established by NOAA Fisheries or USFWS as part of their ESA consultation, which includes a NEPA review process.

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:**
Protection for biota, particularly ESA-listed salmonids, can be achieved and risks mitigated by certain hatchery practices. These hatchery practices are part of individual hatchery program plans and are therefore not the subject of this SEPA review.

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

This proposal will not result in any change to WDFW hatchery facility usage of energy or natural resources.

- **Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:** NA

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection, such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

This proposal will not result in any change to or use of environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection, which may be associated with current practices at WDFW anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries.

- **Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:** NA

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

This proposal will not result in any change to land and shoreline use, which may be associated with current practices at WDFW anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries.

- **Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:** NA

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

This proposal will not result in any change to the demands on transportation or public services and utilities, which may be associated with current practices at WDFW anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries.

- **Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:** NA

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.

As discussed above, this proposal concerns a policy that outlines a set of values to be used in adopting or updating individual hatchery management plans that govern the operation of anadromous salmon and steelhead hatcheries. These values do not directly conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. This current SEPA

review is the first step in a phased review. The next step in the phase review will be the development of new, or review of existing individual hatchery program plans. The relationship between these more narrow individual hatchery program plans and laws or requirements associated with protection of the environment will be the subject of subsequent SEPA or NEPA review processes.