



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 23-037: SIMCOE MOUNTAINS TWO SPRINGS PROTECTION AND RESTORATION – ROCK CREEK SUBBASIN

Description of Proposal:

Objective: Restore two headwater springs in upper Quartz Creek, a tributary of Rock Creek in Klickitat County, Washington to conserve and enhance quantity and quality of water, protect and rehabilitate a meadow, and support biological diversity at both sites for fish and wildlife. This project will enhance one of the unnamed headwater tributary streams that support the Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed “threatened” Middle Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment in the subbasin. Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) critical habitat has been identified by NOAA in the subbasin. Spring and meadow enhancement and restoration has been recommended in the Recovery Plan for the Rock Creek Population of the Middle Columbia River Steelhead Distinct Population Segment and the Lower Mid-Columbia Mainstem Including Rock Creek Subbasin Plan to assist in restoring the historical hydrologic regime and improving the groundwater storage capacity in upper Quartz Creek.

Approach: This project will exclude cattle grazing at two spring locations in the headwaters of Rock Creek which have been degraded by logging and grazing activities. Both springs will be fenced off to exclude cattle and human traffic. Two off-channel watering facilities will be constructed for cattle. One of the springsourced cattle troughs (Milk Ranch Spring) is located in a meadow complex; this trough will be relocated to another site away from the meadow. The meadow will be fenced off as needed to exclude cattle grazing and native vegetation will be planted along the stream channel that runs through the meadow. The second spring (Simcoe Unit Spring) will be restored by constructing a new cattle two-tier trough near the existing location, removing derelict cattle watering equipment, constructing a cattle exclusion fence, and diverting overflow to the nearest stream channel.

Two cattle exclusion areas will be constructed at each spring site to protect a total of 1.6 acres (Milk Spring: 0.8 acres, Simcoe Unit: 0.8 acres). Two revegetated meadow/spring headwater areas totaling approximately 28,864 sq ft (0.66 acres) will be restored with native plants. Two off-site watering troughs with hardened surfaces will be constructed to reduce erosion and cattle hoof compaction. Yakama Nation Fisheries Program (YNFP) will perform coordination, oversight, and administration of habitat restoration activities under this project.

Proponent/Applicant: Yakama Nation
Contact: David Lindley
PO Box 215
Klickitat, WA
509-369-3565

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Simcoe Mountains Unit of the WDFW Klickitat Wildlife Area, located approximately 32 miles by road northeast of Goldendale, Klickitat County, Washington:

Milk Ranch Spring: Township 6N, Range 19E, Section 30

Simcoe Spring: Township 6N, Range 18E, Section 25

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 September 19, 2023**.

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/SimcoeTwoSprings>
- Email to: SimcoeTwoSprings@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: September 5, 2023

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

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

SEPA Log Number: 23-036.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).