



**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

OLYMPIC REGION

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July 29, 2020

**Notice of Final Determination
Flutterby Timber Sale Agreement #30-099655
SEPA File No. 20-063001
Forest Practice Application #2616500**

The Department of Natural Resources issued a Determination of Non-significance (DNS), Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS), Modified DNS/MDNS on **June 30, 2020** for this proposal under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and WAC 197-11-340(2).

This threshold determination is hereby:

Retained.

Modified. Modifications to this threshold determination include the following:

Withdrawn. This threshold determination has been withdrawn due to the following:

Delayed. A final threshold determination has been delayed due to the following:

Summary of Comments and Responses (if applicable):

A comment was received from Department of Ecology. A comment was received by OFCO and is addressed in the attached document.

Responsible Official: Mona Griswold

Position/title: Olympic Region Manager Phone: 360-374-2800

Address: 411 Tillicum Lane
Forks, WA 98331

Date: 7.30.2020

Signature: 

There is no DNR administrative SEPA appeal.

**Flutterby Timber Sale #30-99655
SEPA File # 20-063001
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Comment: This timber sale is a significant action within and adjacent to TCB habitat for which none of the stakeholders appear to be operating under a long-term management plan, nor working in cooperation with neighboring land managers who also have active TCB habitat restoration work. This lack of clear structured, long term planning including oversight, leaves mitigating the long-term potential negative impacts of this timber sale on TCB habitat vulnerable to team stability and budgets. According to the SEPA checklist, *“Management plan for Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly sites on DNR-managed lands, Olympic Region will guide the implementation of the TCB habitat enhancement objectives for this sale.”* However, the DNR *“Management plan for Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly sites on DNR-managed lands, Olympic Region”* states that “more comprehensive efforts will be addressed in a forthcoming plan for Taylor’s checkerspot conservation to be produced by WDFW with DNR collaboration.” Although we understand that all stakeholders are operating in good faith, without a publicly available plan we are left with concerns about who will carry out the long-term monitoring and mitigation work related to this sale and how that work will be funded.

Response:

This proposal is being conducted under a WDFW existing permit. The DNR’s long-term TCB plan has been developed with input from WDFW and USFWS and is currently in Division for review.

This proposal has been developed with significant input from WDFW and USFWS and they strongly support it, as well as input from an adjacent land owner, Center for Natural Lands Management. CNLM was sent a copy of this proposal and had no concerns.

DNR and WDFW have been actively conducting TCB enhancement and restoration work on Kelly Peak and Eden Valley since 2008. This partnership will continue and funding for the activities will be from DNR, grants, and outside sources.

Comment: This timber sale seems very likely to continue the spread of non-native plants, particularly scotch broom, in both the Dan Kelly and Eden Valley balds. Scotch broom is extensive along the Kelly Peak and there are several notable patches on the Eden Valley bald itself. An increased attention to detail and potentially improved methods for handling weeds needs to be implemented to protect these unique environments to continued spread of these non-native plants. Have the additional costs associated with equipment, training, time and effort required for careful, thorough hand application of herbicide been accounted for?

Response: Yes, DNR has been working with guidance from WDFW and the Clallam County Noxious weeds expert to train staff and apply herbicides to control non-native plants. This work has been and continues to be conducted by WCC crews, DNR staff, and WDFW staff.

Funding for the work comes from the Region silviculture and roads budget. In addition, DNR has worked with the Port Gamble-SKIallam tribe to secure a grant to fund treatment of non-native plants.

Non-native invasive plants are very difficult to control but we have been making successful gains on both Kelly Peak and Eden Valley.

Comment: The FPA and SEPA documents refer to reseeded part of the harvest areas with native plants, ideally nectaring plants. What organization is preparing native seeds (from this site) for seed increase and sowing? Is there a budget for this work? Have target community types and plant covers been established?

Response: Several discussions took place about seed options and re-planting. Specifically, host/nectar plants. Host/nectar plants will be obtained from the CNLM nursery and a grant application has been submitted with USFWS to request funds for that purchase. Additional funding options are being explored and pursued. Back-up plans include obtaining C grade seed from the USFS TCB program. Target communities have been established.

Comment: A portion of the sale in unit 6 overlaps with a bald/forest opening and has had some previous (assume DNR) restoration work. Part of this bald is covered by a leave tree area but the upper part abuts spur 1+00 off the proposed I-2185 road and associated landing. This area is vulnerable to disturbance from the landing and would be at less risk if the landing were moved further east. Unlike quite a bit of the rest of unit 6, that area has significant TCB habitat enhancement potential due to its bald ecosystem structure, density of native plants and proximity to the TCB areas on the CNLM land just downslope and should be treated more sensitively than the plan currently suggests. Former/historic roads on both balds/ridges now provide TCB habitat- as vegetation regrows following the harvest it seems like that the new roads in this sale area, especially for the proposed PA-2185 road will also inadvertently create habitat because the road cuts provide dry gravel substrate favored by bald-affiliated native plants. Is this a concern?

Response: No. Traffic on these roads will be minimal and discouraged during active seasons. The purpose of this harvest is to provide additional TCB habitat within the habitat buffers while DNR continues to conduct restoration and enhancement work in the habitat. Harvest activities can mimic natural disasters and TCB can take advantage of the temporary conditions to bolster the population while enhancement work continues.

Comment: In unit 6, the circular LTA north of the I-2180 encompasses an area of significant blowdown. It appears the small diameter trees in this LTA are possibly infected with a pathogen that has weakened the roots. Most of the larger trees in this LTA have blown down already, the patch of dense, small diameter trees that appear to be counted toward the 8 trees per acre are too

small and densely packed to achieve complex stand structure through time and are likely already infected and highly susceptible to whatever impacted the rest of their cohort. None of the ecological, habitat development or other goals typically aimed for by the placement of LTAs will be achieved by this configuration. Furthermore, immediately adjacent to this circular LTA is a shrub wetland. Although it is smaller than the minimum size requiring protection, often in sales I have observed the LTAs applied with discretion to protect these fragile, diverse and unique parts of the forest ecosystem. The required leave trees should be moved to protect the wetland rather than counting the small diameter trees already on or heading to the ground.

Response: Though protecting blow-down patches with leave tree areas is not a common DNR practice, we identified this blow-down patch in Flutterby unit 6 as being closer to meeting our long-term ecological objectives than the surrounding stand. It has naturally retained approximately 8 live, healthy trees per acre and contains ample downed woody debris, while the majority of the stand in this part of unit 6 is overstocked, homogenous reprod. No downed trees within this leave tree area were counted towards the 8 tree per acre leave tree requirement despite two of the 8 trees per acre being intended for downed wood recruitment. The blow-down does not appear to be effected by laminated root rot, as nearly all the downed trees have root wads attached or are snapped off at the base. Whatever the cause of the blow-down event, the trees left standing are obviously more wind-firm and resistant to the factors involved. It is our assertion that maintaining the genetics of these more disturbance resistant trees within the landscape will have overall long-term benefit on the success of the stand post-harvest.

Comment: The rectangular Leave Tree Area across the I-2100 from unit 4 does not make sense. It was originally part of a unit to the south of the road that was removed from the sale. It does not lend ecological or habitat benefits to Unit 4, it appears to be getting LTA credit in a stand that will either be harvested in the future or deferred to benefit the TCB. These leave trees should be placed within the boundaries of Unit 4.

Response: The leave tree area in unit 4 was specifically identified by USFWS as critical wind buffer/micro climate refuge for the adjacent occupied butterfly habitat. The leave tree area's adjacency to the main portion of unit 4 south of the road should provide the same ecological and habitat benefits as it would were it located to the north of the road.