



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL & LEGAL AFFAIRS –
SEPA CENTER
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MEMORANDUM

June 28, 2021

File No. 21-062801

TO: Yakima County, Planning Director
DAHP SEPA Desk
G. Bell/SEPA Desk/P. Harvester, WDFW
W. Meyer/E. Torrey, WDFW
Dept. of Revenue
Yakama Indian Tribe
Yakima Co. Public Services Dept.
M. Whitney/L. Brookham/S. Halsey, CFC

SEPA Register, ECY
Labor & Industries
S. Downes/E. Bartrand/L. Hofmann, WDFW
Parks & Recreation
T. Romanski/B. Vogel, USFWS
Colville Confederated Tribes
D. Goodding, USDA

FROM: Rochelle M. Goss, SEPA Center

SUBJECT: **SEPA LEAD AGENCY & DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE**

This is to advise you that pursuant to WAC 197-11-900 (922 through 948), the Department of Natural Resources has determined that it is Lead Agency for the following:

DNR proposes eliminating quarter township management of Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) habitat in the Ahtanum State Forest (75,000 acres) of Southeast Region. The management strategy will be replaced with managing NSO habitat by spotted owl management unit (SOMU). Managing by SOMU is a landscape based approach and shifts the dispersal habitat to areas where dispersal habitat exists and where it is more likely to develop and be sustainable. At this time, some of the quarter townships cannot reach the fifty percent threshold due to being located at high elevation, in dry forest types, on south facing slopes and in areas where the plant association does not support the canopy closure required to meet dispersal. Establishing dispersal management areas into SOMUs that are based on forest type and areas into SOMUs that are based on forest type and areas that are dispersal habitat according to current inventory data will enhance DNR's ability to meet and maintain the conservation objectives of the HCP. The goal is to create a configuration that provides dispersal habitat in both the short- and long-term. This proposal covers the 75,000+ acres of the Ahtanum State Forest (ASF), located 35 miles west of the city of Union Gap, Yakima County.

Information about this proposal including the Threshold Determination and SEPA Checklist can be accessed through DNR's website at:

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/non-project-actions>

Pursuant to WAC 332-41-504, this proposal was filed in the department's SEPA Center at the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, P.O. Box 47015, Olympia, Washington, on June 28, 2021. We will consider comments on this proposed DNS received by 4:30 p.m. on July 12, 2021. **Comments should be submitted to the SEPA Center at, sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov or P.O. Box 47015, Olympia, Washington 98504-7015 for distribution to the responsible official. Please include the file number listed above on all comments.**