

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: November 20, 2020

Agenda item: 2021 Burch Mountain/Swakane Forest Restoration Project

Presenter(s): Richard Tveten, Forest Management Team Lead

Background summary:

Fire suppression and logging practices prior to acquisition have resulted overstocked conditions with 1) elevated pathogen levels, insect activity and wildfire risk and 2) less diverse and less resilient wildlife habitat.

Staff recommendation: Complete the following projects

The Burch Mountain/Swakane Forest Restoration Project will thin approximately three million board feet on about 750 acres. WDFW will leave between 20 and 40 (in general) of the best available trees per acre to improve habitat quality and put forests on accelerated trajectories to once again develop into resilient, fire-climax forests.

Most of the area will be treated using ground-based equipment including feller bunchers and rubber-tired skidders on slopes of <40%. The steep parts of the Swakane Unit will likely be treated with aerial yarding or cable-assisted machinery.

WDFW will maximize the use of existing roads (open or abandoned), skid trails and landings. Previously abandoned and new temporary roads (if any) will be abandoned at the discretion of the Wildlife Area Manager. The project will meet or exceed State Forest Practice Regulations.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

This project is designed to restore ecological integrity, improve habitat quality for multiple species including mule deer, address forest health concerns, reduce wildfire risks and increase the proportion of large diameter trees.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The WDFW Forester believes there will be some profit from this project assuming log and pulp prices do not fall. This profit would likely be reinvested in additional thinning on wildlife areas.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife follows the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public review process.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Approval of the proposed Burch Mountain/Swakane Forest Restoration Thinning Projects.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to approve the proposed commercial thinning project as presented.

Post decision communications plan:

Wildlife Area staff will notify the public regarding temporary access impacts.

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: November 20, 2020

Agenda item: 2021 Upper Robinson Forest Restoration Project

Presenter(s): Richard Tveten, Forest Management Team Lead

Background summary:

Fire suppression and logging practices prior to acquisition have resulted overstocked conditions with 1) elevated pathogen levels, insect activity and wildfire risk and 2) less diverse and less resilient wildlife habitat.

Staff recommendation: Complete the following projects

The Upper Robinson Forest Restoration Project will thin approximately 1.2 million board feet on 390 acres. It will also remove approximately 4,500 tons of pulpwood. WDFW will leave between 25 and 35 (in general) of the best available trees per acre to improve habitat quality and put forests on accelerated trajectories to once again develop into resilient, fire-climax forests.

Timber will be harvested using ground-based systems, using feller bunchers and rubber tired and/or tracked skidders on slopes < 40%. To the maximum degree possible WDFW will use existing roads, skid trails and landings. There will be minimal construction of temporary roads. These roads will be abandoned after the prescribed burning follow-up treatment in 2023.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

This project is designed to restore ecological integrity, improve habitat quality for multiple species including elk and mule deer, address forest health concerns, reduce wildfire risks and increase the proportion of large diameter trees.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The WDFW Forester believes there will be some profit from this project assuming log and pulp prices do not fall. This profit would likely be reinvested in additional thinning on wildlife areas.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife follows the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public review process.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Approval of the proposed Upper Robinson Forest Restoration Thinning Project.

Draft motion language:

Motion: I move to approve the proposed commercial thinning project as presented.

Post decision communications plan:

Wildlife Area staff will notify the public regarding temporary access impacts.
