



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

Meeting date: 1/14/2022

Agenda item: Forest Health Projects Approval

Presenter(s): Richard Tveten, Forest Management Team Lead, Lands Division, WL Program

Background summary: In accordance with the Management Strategy for the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife's Forests (Approved June 2014), WDFW treats forests where needed to improve wildlife habitat, promote priority species and manage risks. To these ends WDFW has completed 8,254 acres of pre-commercial thinning, 6,376 acres of commercial thinning and 5,375 acres of prescribed burning since 2014.

Staff recommendation: Approval of two proposed forest restoration thinning projects: Colockum Phase 1 and Soda Springs Phase 2.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome: The projects are designed to restore ecological integrity, improve habitat quality for multiple species including deer, elk, western gray squirrels, Mazama pocket gophers and federally listed butterfly species, address forest health concerns and reduce wildfire risks.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation: Collectively, the projects will most likely generate a small net profit in the form of timber sale revenue.

Public involvement process used and what you learned: Public input on general forest management approaches is received during wildlife area management plan updates. Most people want healthy, resilient forest habitats but some are uncomfortable with commercial thinning. WDFW will follow the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) public review process for these projects. Feedback during the SEPA public review process is usually minimal.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps: Approval of the proposed forest restoration thinning projects.

Draft motion language: I move to approve the proposed commercial thinning project as presented.