



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 24-004: POTENTIAL CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATION OF THE GRAY WOLF IN CONJUNCTION WITH PERIODIC STATUS REVIEW

Description of Proposal:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing rule amendments that would reclassify the gray wolf from Endangered status under WAC 220-610-010 to Sensitive status in the state of Washington under WAC 220-200-100. Based on 14 consecutive years of population growth, population modeling predictions that indicate Washington's wolf population is robust and will continue to grow and expand its range (including in the Southern Cascades and Northwest Coast recovery region), and ongoing state and federal protections, WDFW proposes to reclassify the wolf to indicate that the wolf does not meet the definition of State Endangered, which requires that the species is "seriously threatened with extinction" (WAC 220-610-110).

WDFW staff considered the possibility of proposing a State Threatened classification for the gray wolf. However, current information indicates that the wolf also does not best fit the definition of State Threatened, which requires that a species is "...likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout a significant portion of its range within the state without cooperative management or removal of threats" (WAC 220-610-110). Current information does not indicate that wolves are threatened with extinction or likely to be threatened with extinction in the foreseeable future in Washington state.

WDFW staff's recommendation is to reclassify the wolf to State Sensitive, "vulnerable or declining and is likely to become endangered or threatened in a significant portion of its range within the state without cooperative management or removal of threats" (WAC 220-610-110). This reclassification would reflect the significant progress toward recovery that Washington's wolf population has made since the original state listing in 1980 but recognizes that wolves remain vulnerable in western Washington and should continue to be managed for recovery within the state as a protected species.

Protective measures will remain in effect for wolves in Washington if the proposed rule amendments are approved. Changing the classification of wolves to state Sensitive status would continue to protect them from unlawful take under Chapter 77.15 RCW. The species would continue to be protected from malicious and intentional harassment. RCW 77.15.130 outlines that Sensitive wildlife shall not be hunted, taken, or harassed. In addition, the proposed Sensitive status is a sub-category of protected wildlife, which "shall not be hunted or fished." RCW 77.08.010(52); 77.12.020(5). Wolves would also remain on the list of Priority Habitats and Species (PHS).

WDFW is also incorporating the Periodic Status Review for the Gray Wolf by reference.

Proponent/Applicant: Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
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Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Statewide

The Following Document is Incorporated by Reference: This document provides species-specific information on the proposal.

Smith, J. B., B. T. Maletzke, T. Roussin, and G. R. Spence. 2024. Periodic Status Review for the Gray Wolf in Washington. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, Washington. 58 + vii pp.

The Document is Available to be Read at:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife - Natural Resources Building,
1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA, Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

The document is also available for review online at:

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments> (scroll down to 24004) and
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02427>

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 law 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.¹ Agencies, tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 89 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **11:59 pm on May 6, 2024.**

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/SEPA_GrayWolf
- Email to: SEPA_GrayWolf@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, the updated status of this proposal may be viewed 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.

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: February 7, 2024

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

1. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 24-004.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).