SEPA[1] Environmental Checklist

Purpose of checklist

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. **You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown.** You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

The checklist questions apply to **all parts of your proposal**, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Instructions for lead agencies

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B, plus the Supplemental Sheet for Nonproject Actions (Part D). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in "Part B: Environmental Elements" that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

[1] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/Checklist-guidance

A.Background

Find help answering background questions[2]

1. **Name of proposed project, if applicable:**

   Union River Estuary Theler Wetlands Restoration Project

2. **Name of applicant:**

   Andy Hokit
   Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

3. **Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:**

   PO Box 2169

   Belfair, WA 98528

   360.275.3575

4. **Date checklist prepared:**

   4/1/2024

5. **Agency requesting checklist:**

   WDFW

6. **Proposed timing of schedule (including phasing, if applicable):**

   2024 - 2026

7. **Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.**

   no

8. **List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.**

   -Wetland Delineation

   -Geotechnical Assessment

   -Cultural Resource Assessment

9. **Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.**

   no

10. **List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.**

    -USACE Permit

    -WDFW HPA

[2] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-A-Background

-USFWS ESA Compliance

-NMFS ESA Compliance

-Section 106 NHPA

-Section 401 DOE

-Mason County Floodplain Development Permit

11. Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) propose to restore 7 acres of estuarine wetland habitat at the 74-acre project site at the Mary E. Theler Wetlands Nature Preserve now/soon to be a part of the WDFW Union River Unit in the southern part of the Union River Estuary on Hood Canal.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG) propose to restore 7 acres of estuarine wetland habitat at the 74-acre project site at the Mary E. Theler Wetlands Nature Preserve now/soon to be a part of the WDFW Union River Unit in the southern part of the Union River Estuary on Hood Canal.

Specific project elements include:

• Removing 825 ft of one levee and 425 ft of a second levee, consisting of a combined total of 1,999.75 Cubic Yards of fill material; this fill material appears to be similar material from the excavated inside of the levees and will be placed back into the excavated areas to match existing estuarine elevations inside and outside of the removed levee.

• Filling the straightened estuarine channel and excavating a new sinuous pilot channel that mimics other natural channels in the area, connecting it to the existing stream.

• Working cooperatively with Mason County Roads to raise Roessel Road with the intent to eliminate flooding and road closures, connecting the raised road with the existing raised trail/levee system.

• Raising a portion of existing gravel emergency access road to the new elevation of Roessel Rd.

• Replacing one 18-inch culvert on the existing emergency access road with a 15 ft culvert.

• Construction of a 1200’ elevated piling supported boardwalk built in the footprint of the removed levee and connecting the existing trails.

• Finally, re-vegetating with native plants where needed.

Benefits to the project area, local community, and Hood Canal watershed include eliminating flooding and temporary closure of Roessel Rd., restoring natural processes to 7 acres of important intertidal wetland habitat for ESA listed salmonoid populations, improving trail conditions for community access and use, and eliminating a tidal fish passage barrier.

This project qualifies for the Habitat Recovery Pilot Program (HRPP) process under RCW 77.55.480 which does not require a SEPA threshold determination. However, WDFW is issuing and distributing a threshold determination for awareness and transparency

12. **Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.**

-The project is located at the Mary E. Theler Wetlands Nature Preserve, located in Mason County on NE Roessel Rd Belfair, WA, 98528.

-The project area coordinates (NAD 83) are

47.4397517, -122.8398437

-1/4 section - NW Section 32 Township 23N Range 1W

-see attached maps in DAHP letter

B.Environmental Elements

1. Earth

Find help answering earth questions[3]

a. **General description of the site:**

The Site is in a lightly developed, mixed conservation and residential area in southern Belfair, Washington. The Site generally consists of relatively flat topography (Elevation 8 to 10) in the intertidal marsh immediately west of NE Roessel Road.

[3] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-earth

The Site is bounded to the east by NE Roessel Road and a gravel-surfaced access road, to the north by a dike (that will remain in place), and to the east and south by two dikes that will be removed as part of the Project. NE Roessel Road is currently at approximately Elevation 10 and separates the wetlands from the Golden Bell Mobile Home Park to theeast. The surface of the dikes surrounding the Site are between Elevation 13 to 14, with sideslope angles of approximately 2H:1V (Horizontal:Vertical) and make up a portion of a larger pedestrian trail system. An east-west-oriented 2-foot-diameter metal culvert runs under the gravel access road approximately 420 feet south of the curve in NE Roessel Road. The surface of the dikes are covered with sparse vegetation including marsh grasses and occasional young alder. The gravel access roads along the northern and eastern Site boundary contain few evergreens and alder. The wetland areas within the Site contain patches of marsh grasses.

Circle or highlight one: Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:

b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

The surface of the dikes surrounding the Site are between Elevation 13 to 14, with sideslope angles of approximately 2H:1V (Horizontal:Vertical) and make up a portion of a larger pedestrian trail system. Project site is flat otherwise.

c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them, and note any agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils.

Geotechnical assessment revealed 3 units of soil -

1. Artificial Fill (Af)

Artificial fill was encountered in all explorations from the ground surface to depths ranging from 2.5 to 5.5 feet bgs. The fill generally consisted of brown, slightly moist to wet, sand with gravel (SP)1 , sandy silt (ML) and silty sand (SM) with scattered organics and small wood debris. The fill was placed to construct the dikes and generally appeared to be sourced locally from an excavated trench that is present along much of the landward side of the dike.

2. Marsh Deposits - Marsh deposits were encountered in all CPT/DPT explorations

immediately underlying the artificial fill, and extending to the depths explored. The marsh deposits consisted of very soft to soft, low to medium plastic clay and silt (CL, ML) and very loose, nonplastic silt and silty sand (ML), sand with varying amounts of silt and gravel (SM, SPSM, SP), and sandy organic silt (OL) with trace to little organics and little shell fragments up to 3 inches in length.

3. Vashon Recessional Outwash - Although not encountered in our on-Site explorations for this Project, we infer from previous near-Site data collected by Aspect (Aspect, 2012) that Vashon recessional outwash deposits are present between approximately 45 to 102 feet bgs. The Vashon recessional outwash deposits generally consist of medium dense to dense sand with varying amounts of silt (SP, SM), and medium stiff to very stiff silt (ML), and clay (CL). The Vashon recessional outwash deposits can be expected to exhibit moderate strength, low to moderate compressibility, and low to high permeability.

d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.

The dikes in the project area were likely formed using material from the adjacent borrow ditch.

e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill.

The proposed project will result in the removal of the North/South running 825 ft. levee consisting of 1,644 cubic yards of fill material, and the removal of the East/West running 425 ft. dike consisting of 356 CY of fill material. Our project team has coordinated with Mason County Public Works to elevate a section of Roessel Rd as part of the overall project scope. This project element replaces the previously planned setback dike to be constructed directly west of Roessel Rd, which would have resulted in more fill placed in our wetland project area and significant challenges in avoiding existing power lines. A 400-foot access road that is currently part of the Theler Wetlands Trail and used for pedestrians as well as emergency vehicles access for the classroom will be raised in sections to accommodate the elevating of Roessel Rd. The access road will include a culvert replacement to remove the existing 18-inch culvert and replace it with a 15 ft. culvert to allow better connection to the upstream fresh water wetlands.

See attached design plans for cut/fill tables and wetland impacts.

f. Could erosion occur because of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

The removal of these levees and elevating of Roessel Rd will allow for the full tidal re-connection of 7 acres of wetland. Removing the two levees allows for hydrologic reconnection and restores sediment processes to several historic distributary channels. An increase in channels will lead to a higher availability of foraging options and protection for juvenile Hood Canal Summer Chum salmon.

g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

Pilings will be placed in the footprint of the dikes to support a pedestrian boardwalk. See attached plans.

h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any.

Trackhoe, dozers, and or excavators used for this project will be inspected daily for leaks. Construction machines will use low pressure tires, minimal hard-turn paths for tracked vehicles, and use temporary mats or plates within wet areas or on sensitive soils. Emergency erosion controls such as sediment control materials and an oil-absorbing floating boom will be onsite and ready for deployment if necessary. Soil containment kits and a description of hazardous materials that will be used (if any) will be available on site. Vegetable based hydraulic fluids (biodegradable oil) will be used in any vehicle that will be operated in or near the water.

2. Air

Find help answering air questions[4]

a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

Emissions from Trackhoe, dozers, excavators and trucks will be produced during construction actions. We anticipate this to be less than 2 full weeks of work.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe.

No.

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

None.

[4] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-Air

3. Water

Find help answering water questions[5]

a. Surface:

Find help answering surface water questions[6]

1. **Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.**

   Tidal channels from Hood Canal flow into the project area. An un named tributary runs into the project area and connects to the tidal channels. Multiple estuarine and forested wetlands are present in and adjacent to the project area.

2. **Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.**

   All Dike removal grading and Culvert replacement activities are at or below MHHW. The unnamed stream restoration portion of this project typically has low flows or no flow throughout the summer and the channel work area is tidal. The road portion of the project is above MHHW and below the extreme high-water elevation.

3. **Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected. Indicate the source of fill material.**

   *Please see attached cut and fill table from plan drawings

4. **Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

   This stream reach typically goes dry or has very low flows throughout the summer and the fish work window. If there is a flow, at the upstream end of the project area a coffer dam will be built to prevent water from entering the work area. The typical dewatering plan will include sandbags with pea gravel at an approximate height of 3', and 6 mil poly sheeting. Water will then be gravity-diverted through flexible diversion pipe of sufficient size to carry flow in the upstream pool around the work area to a point downstream of the work area. Alternatively, flow may be pumped around the work area. If a pump is used, the pump intake is to be screened with a maximum 1/8-inch mesh to keep fish from entering the pump. A perforated sheet fish screen will be placed upstream of the coffer dam and pump and downstream of the dam/construction area. The screen will be cleaned daily or as needed. A deflector will be placed at the outlet of the return pipe to reduce scour.

[5] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-3-Water

[6] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-3-Water/Environmental-elements-Surface-water

The construction will be slowly re-watered to prevent loss of surface water downstream. This will prevent a sudden increase in stream turbidity. The construction site will be observed after water reintroduction to prevent stranding of aquatic organisms downstream of project location. All stream diversion devices, equipment pipe and conduits will be removed and disturbed soil and vegetation will be restored after the diversion is no longer needed.

5. **Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.**

   Yes.

6. **Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge.**

   No.

b. Ground:

Find help answering ground water questions[7]

1. **Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

   No.

2. **Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals…; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.**

   None.

c. Water Runoff (including stormwater):

1. **Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe.**

   None.

2. **Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe.**

   No.

3. **Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe.**

[7] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-3-Water/Environmental-elements-Groundwater

Alterations will be made to the path of the tidal channels, but they will still drain water from the un named tributary.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any:

none

4. Plants

Find help answering plants questions

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

☒ **deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other**

☒ **evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other**

☒ **shrubs**

☒ **grass**

☐ **pasture**

☐ **crop or grain**

☐ **orchards, vineyards, or other permanent crops.**

☒ **wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other**

☒ **water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other**

☐ **other types of vegetation**

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

Vegetation growing on top of the areas of excavation will be removed

-plants growing on top of dikes to be removed

-plants growing in path of tidal channel excavation

-plants growing in footprint of culvert installation

c. List threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

none

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any.

A post-construction planting plan is included with the project plans (attached)

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

-Himalayan Blackberry

-Reed canarygrass

-spotted jewelweed

-perennial sowthistle

-bull thistle

-bittersweet nightshade

5. Animals

Find help answering animal questions[8]

a. List any birds and other animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site.

Examples include:

- **Birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:**
- **Mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:**
- **Fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:**

This area provides habitat for many common species found throughout western Washington such as deer, elk, fox, bobcat, coyote, hare, raccoon, river otter, beaver, muskrat, small rodents, shrews, hawks, owls, ducks, geese, swallows, red-winged blackbird, killdeer, woodpeckers and a variety of songbirds.

b. List any threatened and endangered species known to be on or near the site.

-ESA listed Hood Canal Summer chum

-Puget Sound Chinook salmon

-Puget Sound Steelhead

-Common loon

-Bull trout

-Western Grebe

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Hood Canal summer chum and other salmon species utilize the tidal channels in this estuarine area as important feeding and rearing zones during their outmigration to the ocean. This is an important stop for migratory bird species during winter and spring, as it provides excellent foraging habitat.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any.

This area would benefit from levee removal to allow sediment distribution with tidal processes that would facilitate tidal channel & marsh development.

[8] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-5-Animals

The Union River watershed is considered the stronghold for recovery of federally listed Hood Canal Summer Chum Salmon. Summer Chum utilize the Union River for spawning and the estuary for rearing. This project will address one of the major factors leading to the decline of Hood Canal Summer Chum habitat by protecting natal sub-estuarine tidal marsh, fresh water marsh, and riparian habitat from development. Along with benefiting Summer Chum, this project will enhance Coho Salmon and Chinook Salmon habitat through the restored connectivity in the estuarine system. Critical habitat for Federal and state listed Bull Trout will also be protected by this proposed project. This project will establish full hydrologic, geomorphic, and sediment processes into the 7-acre restoration area which will increase channel edge to surface ratio benefiting juvenile salmon as well as provide protection of the estuary from future habitat stressors such as development and agriculture.

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

6. Energy and natural resources

Find help answering energy and natural resource questions[9]

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

N/A

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe.

N/A

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any.

N/A

7. Environmental health

Health Find help with answering environmental health questions[10]

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste, that could occur because of this proposal? If so, describe.

Heavy machinery use oil and grease in their operation – there is always a small risk of these chemicals being spilled on the project site, however small.

[9] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-6-Energy-natural-resou
[10] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-7-Environmental-health

1. **Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.**

   none.

2. **Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.**

   none.

3. **Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project.**

   Gasoline and oil for heavy machinery.

4. **Describe special emergency services that might be required.**

   none.

5. **Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any.**

   All equipment will be staged above MHHW. Equipment will be refueled away from the project location. At no time will equipment enter the water. Any sandbags used during construction will be removed after the completion of the project.

b. Noise

1. **What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?**

   none.

2. **What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site)?**

   Noise from construction equipment during normal working hours (8:00 - 5:00)

3. **Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:**

   N/A

8. Land and shoreline use

Find help answering land and shoreline use questions[11]

a. **What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.**

   The property is in an area known as the Mary E. Theler Wetlands Nature Preserve. Due to the property's wetland and intertidal characteristics, land use has been limited to trail walking as part of the more than 3 miles of accessible walking trails, and wildlife viewing

[11] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-8-Land-shoreline-use

in the salt marsh/estuary. The property was owned by the North Mason School District (NMSD) until 2023, when it was transferred to WDFW. The trail system on the property connects to a larger system of walking trails on WDFW lands just north of the property. The property has been used by the NMSD and other educational groups and nonprofits for educational purposes. These educational opportunities will continue in the future.

Multiple WDFW parcels surround the property and are managed as part of the Union River Wildlife Area. The unit is managed for multiple uses, including birdwatching, nature study, waterfowl hunting, and estuary habitat restoration. This unit also features an interpretive trail.

Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement group manages one parcel adjacent to the project area that is classified as category 1 wetland. This parcel is slated to be transferred to WDFW to be managed as part of the Union River Wildlife Area.

There are multiple parcels directly to the east of the property and adjacent to State Route 3. A few are private residential and one is managed as a children's center and preschool.

North Mason School District also owns a parcel to the east of the property. They manage the Mary E. Theler Early Learning Center as an educational resource for the district.

To the northeast of the project area and north and east of Roessel Road, there is a mobile home park. The western end of this parcel experiences flooding along with Roessel Road during periods of low pressure/high tide in the winter.

The Bridge church owns a parcel to the northeast of the project area. The parcel is predominantly wetland on the west side and undeveloped.

b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses because of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nonforest use?

There is a history of agricultural use on the parcels directly to the north (the former Jack Johnson farm that was sold to WDFW), but it is unclear whether the project site was used for agricultural purposes.

1. **Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how?**

   No.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Two of the most prominent features on the property are the two historic dikes. According to a 1980 EIS for a proposed recreational park on the site, these earthen dikes were constructed by the Puget Sound Retrievers Club in the 1950s (approximately) and became part of the Theler Wetlands Trail. The dikes consist of earthen berms with trapezoidal cross-sections measuring approximately 4-ft. tall and approximately 15 ft. wide across the top and approximately 25 ft. wide at the base. The larger of the two dike segments (western dike) extends southwest from the north edge of the property for approximately 800 feet. At the southern end of this dike, there is a large blown out section that used to be the location of a 21-inch CMP culvert that had been buried when a 12" overflow and tidegate were installed to create a freshwater pond. There is now a tidal channel running through this section, and pieces of the remnant culvert are still onsite. A second segment (southern dike) extends approximately 400 feet southeast from the south end of the larger segment forming an L-shape dike. The elevation along the entire length of these two dikes ranges from 14.40' to 12.90' NAVD88. These dikes will be removed as part of this project.

A connected raised gravel roadbed east of the dikes forms a rectangular-shaped enclosure that is part of the larger Theler Wetland. This gravel road ranges in elevation from 11.64' to 12.84' NAVD88. Local area storm water drainage discharges into the Theler Pond through an 18" diameter CMP culvert located at the southeast corner of the site. A smaller, older segment of dike extends southwest from the southwest corner of the two previously described dikes. The smaller dike consists of a rounded earthen berm measuring approximately 2-2 ½ feet tall and approximately 4-5 feet wide at the base. The top of the dike has an alignment of rough-hewn cedar fence posts spaced at regular intervals.

Roessel Rd is a 20 ft wide asphalt Mason County roadway and runs through parcel 12332-00-60010 for 1500 ft.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

-The dikes will be removed

-the culvert will be replaced.

e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

-rural residential

f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

unknown.

g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

SMA Marine Shoreline

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

There are category 1 Wetlands onsite.

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

0

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

0

k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any.

N/A

l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any.

The land is owned by Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and managed as part of the Union River Wildlife Area.

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any:

N/A

9. Housing

Find help answering housing questions[12]

a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

N/A

b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

N/A

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

N/A

[12] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-9-Housing

10. Aesthetics

Find help answering aesthetics questions[13]

a. **What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?**

   N/A

b. **What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?**

   Dikes will be removed and boardwalk will be installed.

c. **Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:**

   Aesthetics will be improved.

11. Light and glare

Find help answering light and glare questions[14]

a. **What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?**

   none

b. **Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?**

   no

c. **What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?**

   none

d. **Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:**

   N/A

12. Recreation

Find help answering recreation questions

a. **What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?**

Hiking, birdwatching, wildlife viewing

b. **Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.**

No.

c. **Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:**

[13] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-10-Aesthetics
[14] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-11-Light-glare

The project will reconnect two sections of trail that were disrupted by the breach in the dike. This will enhance hiking opportunities in the project site.

13. Historic and cultural preservation

Find help answering historic and cultural preservation questions[15]

a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers? If so, specifically describe.

From local USACE Archeologist Stephanie Neil-

Both the Jack Johnson farm to the north (where the Salmon Center is now) and the Theler Wetlands were once part of the Puget Mill Company Farm. The first dikes in the area were done for the Puget Mill Company Farm in the 1890s.

The Puget Mill Company put their Lynch Cove holdings up for sale in 1935. The Theler property is part of 500 acres that Sam and Mary Theler bought from Puget Mill Company in 1935. (Davis Page 102)

From 1980 Theler EIS – "The Puget Sound Retrievers Club, a Kitsap Peninsula sportsman's group, constructed the pond and associated dike on the property approximately thirty years ago. The group continues to use the dike and pond for training hunting dogs and conducted organized field trials. The trial events are widely attended by participants from throughout the Pacific Northwest and California."

The construction date might actually be late 1950s because there was a permit to appropriate public waters submitted by Sam Theler dated 1958. The water was to be taken from Sweetwater Creek and used for irrigation and duck ponds. It notes "Owner subject to lease to Puget Sound Retriever Club." The Remarks state "Contract has been let to construct a dike approximately 5 ft. high to keep salt water out of the 7-acre tract as designated on the attached sketch. Some water now naturally flows through the area which will be so equipped that fresh water inside the dam can be raised or lowered for agricultural and duck hunting purposes."

A smaller, older segment of dike extends southwest from ACOE-constructed Theler Wetland Trail at the south end of the Project APE. The smaller dike consists of a rounded earthen berm measuring approximately 2-2 ½ feet tall and approximately 4-5 feet wide at the base. The top of the dike has an alignment of rough-hewn cedar fence posts spaced at regular intervals.

[15] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-13-Historic-cultural-p

b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources.

Subsurface conditions indicate the Project APE could have been used during the late precontact period for marine and intertidal resource procurement, however no cultural resources were identified during this assessment. The gray, stratified sediment package below approximately 60 cm has a relatively "low risk" for archaeological resources based on sediment deposition in anaerobic conditions i.e., a perennially submerged older landform.

c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc.

In addition to preliminary archival review and research in DAHP's database, HCSEG contracted ASM, Inc. Surface and subsurface survey was completed by ASM Affiliates, Inc. (ASM) which is available for review in the WISAARD project 2023-02-00881.

ASM carried out fieldwork and concluded that the overall project area has a low potential to impact precontact cultural resources, should any be present within the API. During the precontact period, subsurface investigations showed that the landform would have been a tidal marsh that would not have been amenable to human habitation. ASM identified a segment of historic period dikes that have been previously determining ineligible for listing in state or federal registers.

Consultation with DAHP and affected tribes are underway via Section 106. Please see attached letter.

d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required.

Please see Inadvertent Discovery Plan in attached DAHP letter.

14. Transportation

Find help with answering transportation questions[16]

a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

The project site can be accessed from NE Roessel rd. as well as State Route 3. They are depicted on attached site maps.

[16] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-B-Environmental-elements/Environmental-elements-14-Transportation

b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

The Mason County Transit Authority runs a bus to the nearby Timberland Library, just over 0.25 miles away.

c. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

NE Roessel Rd. is a Mason County right of way. This road will be elevated in one section to address flooding during periods of high winter tides and low pressure. Please see the attached project drawings.

d. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.

No.

e. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

There will be no increase in traffic caused by completion of this project. The project will reconnect two sections of trail and restore/enhance the previous hiking opportunity.

f. Will the proposal interfere with, affect, or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

No.

g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

WDFW Trailheads to Union Wildlife Area, the Salmon Center, and one private residence will be inaccessible for very short periods during construction on Roessel rd.

15. Public services

Find help answering public service questions[17]

a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No.

b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

N/A

[17] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-15-public-services

16. Utilities

Find help answering utilities questions[18]

a. **Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other:**

   None.

b. **Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.**

   None.

C.Signature

Find help about who should sign[19]

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

_____

Type name of signee: Andy Hokit

Position and agency/organization: Project Manager, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group

Date submitted: 4/1/2024

[18] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review/sepa-guidance/sepa-checklist-guidance/sepa-checklist-section-b-environmental-elements/environmental-elements-16-utilities

[19] https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/SEPA/Environmental-review/SEPA-guidance/SEPA-checklist-guidance/SEPA-Checklist-Section-C-Signature