



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 24-016: UNION RIVER ESTUARY THELER WETLANDS RESTORATION

Description of Proposal:

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.

Proponent/Applicant: Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG)
Contact: Andy Hokit
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Andy@pnwsalmoncenter.org

Location of Proposal, including street, if any: Mary E. Theler Wetlands Nature Preserve, NE Roessel Rd, Belfair, Mason County, Washington: Township 23N, Range 1W, Section 32.

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 law¹ 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.² **We will not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. The comment period will end at **5:00 pm on April 16, 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/ThelerWetlandsRestoration>
- Email to: ThelerWetlandsRestoration@PublicInput.com

Responsible Official: Lisa Wood

Position/Title: SEPA Responsible Official and SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Director's Office

Address: PO Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal 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.¹

If you have questions about this determination 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: April 2, 2024

SIGNATURE:



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 24-016.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).