



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

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November 27, 2018

**Notice of Final Determination
Teanaway Community Forest Recreation Plan
SEPA File No. 18-102401**

The Department of Natural Resources issued a Determination of Non-significance (DNS), Mitigated Determination of Non-significance (MDNS), Modified DNS/MDNS on October 24, 2018 for this proposal under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and WAC 197-11-340(2).

This threshold determination is hereby:

Retained.

Modified. Modifications to this threshold determination include the following:

Withdrawn. This threshold determination has been withdrawn due to the following:

Delayed. A final threshold determination has been delayed due to the following:

Summary of Comments and Responses (if applicable): Please see attached

Responsible Official: Todd Welker

Position/title: Southeast Region Manager

Phone: (509)925-0954

Address: 713 Bowers Road, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Date: November 27, 2018

Signature: Todd Welker

There is no DNR administrative SEPA appeal.

Teanaway Community Forest Recreation Plan State Environmental Policy Act Comment and Response Summary

The Draft Teanaway Community Forest Recreation Plan and related State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) documents were released to the public for formal review and comment on October 24th, 2018; the comment period closed at 5:00pm on November 7th, 2018. One public meeting was held on October 24th, 2018 to present the draft plan and explain how public comments would be accepted under SEPA rules.

This document was provided to DNR's SEPA Responsible Official – along with a copies of SEPA comments received – for consideration prior to issuing a final determination. DNR staff examined each comment to identify the SEPA or draft recreation plan components that were addressed.

COMMENT OVERVIEW

The agencies received a total of 559 comments (422 unique and 175 form letters), mostly on the draft recreation plan. A few comments were specific to the SEPA documents. There were a variety of comment categories. Comments that suggested clarifications or additions were noted, and in a few cases, changes were made to the plan.

The summaries below are representative of the comments in submitted letters and are intended to characterize the major subject areas included in all comments received. They are organized by component of the draft plan and associated SEPA documents, including:

- General comments pertaining to the entire document
- Questions on Plan components
 - Enhance community connections
 - ORV use
 - Scenic driving
 - Camping
 - Snowmobile use
 - Groomed non-motorized winter trails
 - ADA Access
 - Mountain bike trails
 - Quad access
 - General recreation ideas
- Planning process comments
- SEPA documents – Non-project Review Form

As noted above, the SEPA Responsible Official received a copy of the comments. The SEPA Responsible Official reviewed the resulting modifications to the Draft Teanaway Recreation Plan and considered all the SEPA-related plan comments before issuing the final SEPA threshold determination.

GENERAL COMMENTS PERTAINING TO THE ENTIRE DOCUMENT

GENERAL COMMENTS: (218 unique comments plus 177 form letters) Expressed user support for the recreation plan concepts, strategies, tools, and priorities. The Plan is an important step to provide recreation opportunities over the next 15 years.

GENERAL RESPONSE: We appreciate the interest of the public in this plan and look forward to working with a variety of stakeholders in the future, as projects get underway.

COMMENTS RELATED TO THE PLAN

GENERAL COMMENTS (10): Expressed support for the Recreation Plan and encouraging that trails connect to the routes over Cle Elum ridge identified in the Towns to Teanaway plan.

RESPONSE: The summer and winter concepts identify community connections as a high priority in the Plan for non-motorized trails and snowmobile use.

COMMENT: Ensure boating is included as a use in the Plan to provide river access points for boating.

RESPONSE: References to boating and access points on the river was added to the Plan in the strategies and tools, summer concepts and project implementation.

GENERAL COMMENTS (67): Ensure existing ORV use would continue in the Community Forest.

RESPONSE: The 2015 Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan called for DNR and WDFW to use the recreation planning process to determine whether the use of two-wheeled motorcycles is appropriate in the forest. By using the planning process, the motorcycle use question was resolved allowing continued motorcycle use on the existing three multi-use Forest Service trails. The decision process included field visits, suitability analysis, and extensive committee and community discussion. The final decision balanced the popularity of the trails by all user types (horse, hike, bike and motorcycle), with the unique technical nature of these trails. In addition, a scenic driving loop was included in the plan to provide access for all ages and abilities. Street legal vehicles will be able to use the scenic driving route.

COMMENTS (12): Expand ORV use in the Teanaway Community Forest including trails across Cle Elum Ridge to Roslyn and Ronald.

RESPONSE: Connections to additional Forest Service trails and motorized trail connections across Cle Elum Ridge and Liars Prairie were evaluated during the planning process. Lack of legal easements, private landowner concerns, broad floodplains on the West Fork Teanaway River, habitat protection goals, and limited capacity for development and maintenance of new trails on adjacent ownerships were deciding factors in the decision to not develop additional motorized trails.

COMMENTS (9): Why is ORV use considered a secondary use in the summer Primary Management Objective (PMO)?

RESPONSE: Primary Management Objectives (PMO) identify the principle recreation use or uses for which an area is managed. PMO's are a tool intended to provide recreational users with an understanding of the types of recreational activities to expect. Secondary ORV use in the summer just implies that the majority of summer use is non-motorized. ORV is no less important as a secondary use it is just a way to describe management objectives in planning.

COMMENT: Prior Teanaway landowners gated off roads and excluded ORV use. This plan allows ORV use.

RESPONSE: The prior Teanaway landowners only allowed motorcycle use on the three multi-use Forest Service trails. The 2015 Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan called for DNR and WDFW to use the recreation planning process to determine whether the use of two-wheeled motorcycles is appropriate in the forest. On page 16 of the Recreation Plan, the question was resolved with continued use of the existing motorcycle use on the three multi-use Forest Service trails. All other motor vehicles – ATV's, ORV's, wheeled all-terrain vehicles and 4x4's will continue to be prohibited from trails, closed roads, and cross-country travel.

COMMENTS (4): Against continued ORV in the Community Forest.

RESPONSE: Noted. The 2015 Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan called for DNR and WDFW to use the recreation planning process to determine whether the use of two-wheeled motorcycles is appropriate in the forest. During the recreation planning process the question was resolved with continued use of the existing three multi-use Forest Service trails.

COMMENTS (8): Support for the scenic drive but make design changes related to the road standard, route, vehicle types, fire access, and all ability access.

RESPONSE: Changes were made in the Plan to more clearly describe the scenic drive as a low maintenance level forest road, which should allow most street legal vehicles access to the road

for all ages and ability. The final route to be determined during on-site analysis. Fire access is beyond the scope of the recreation plan.

COMMENTS (11): Concerns over the scenic drive due to noise, trespass potential, wildlife impacts and the ability to control use.

RESPONSE: The suitability mapping process was used in the alternative development as the first screen in environmental analysis. Additional site-specific environmental analysis will be conducted prior to development of the scenic drive for final location, road standard and management. The issues raised will be a part of the site-specific analysis.

COMMENTS (7): Ideas on campground design related to floodplain locations, rough access roads, need for more horse campsites, first-come first served use, and amenities. Comments stated that camping is valued by users and important to the Community Forest.

RESPONSE: Campground renovations will address the issues listed above and will include improved access roads, protection of floodplains and improved amenities. The majority of campsites will be managed on a first-come first-served basis. In the future, the Plan calls to explore the potential for reservations at group or individual sites.

COMMENTS (3): Ensure that existing groomed snowmobile trails remain, or are improved. Improve snowmobile signage for user safety. When you add a non-motorized groomed ski area, snowmobile opportunities will be reduced.

RESPONSE: As shown on the winter concept maps existing snowmobile trails will remain with the addition of short north-south connectors to enhance grooming efficiency. Some trails may be relocated as roads are decommissioned usually along stream adjacent locations. The non-motorized groomed trail area will be located in an area that is separated from the snowmobile area with minimal impact on the existing network of snowmobile trails. Local residential snowmobile access will be continue. Development of Sno-Parks will allow for additional user education and signage.

COMMENT: What are the plans for north south routes for snowmobile groomed trails listed in the winter concept map?

RESPONSE: As shown on the winter concept maps existing snowmobile trails will remain with the addition of short north-south connectors to enhance grooming efficiency. The length will be determined by site-specific field analysis, likely ranging from 4-6 miles in length.

COMMENTS (3): Expand the winter groomed non-motorized trail area. Add flat areas by West Fork Teanaway gate and areas southeast of Carlson Canyon.

RESPONSE: The winter groomed non-motorized trail area includes the flat area by the West Fork Teanaway gate. Carlson Canyon is steep and would be difficult for grooming. Initially the

plan is to start with the area as noted on the winter concept map.

COMMENT: Keep the disabled and elderly in mind as you plan for public access.

RESPONSE: Facilities will be designed to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The scenic drive will provide access for all ages and abilities.

COMMENT: Can we have more downhill mountain bike trails?

RESPONSE: The trails developed in the forest will be designed for multi-use non-motorized use, for this reason the recommendations from the community was to develop cross-country trails. The soils are very dry in the summer, which make steeper downhill trails very difficult to maintain. Trails from the forest will connect to Cle Elum Ridge where downhill mountain bike trails are anticipated in the Towns to Teanaway project.

COMMENT: Provide access to the First Creek parcels from Highway 97.

RESPONSE: Access enhancements to First Creek was determined to be beyond the 15-year planning horizon. In addition, high speeds and inadequate site distances make access from Highway 97 is difficult.

COMMENT: Loss of access from Wagon Wheel road for motorized and snowmobile use.

RESPONSE: Access has not changed to the three multi-use Forest Service trails from developed trailheads. Snowmobile trails will also remain the same.

COMMENT: Ensure recreational trail access is provided across new fence lines.

RESPONSE: Site-specific access points will be determined when trails are formally established. Implementation of the recreation plan will include survey of existing trails and development of a trail plan, which will include determining appropriate fence crossings.

COMMENTS RELATED TO THE PROCESS

COMMENT: We did not see any mention of climate change in the Plan.

RESPONSE: Climate change is outside of the scope of this plan but will be taken into consideration when plan components are implemented at the site-specific level.

COMMENT: Plan fails to address cumulative effect to wildlife of additional motorized use.

RESPONSE: The only additional motorized use proposed will be the scenic drive. In developing

the suitability analysis, biologists from WDFW were involved in the mapping and development of low/medium/high levels of each biological criteria. It was determined that managed access was acceptable for a defined route such as the scenic road. Additional site-specific analysis will be conducted during the final design of the road and its management.

COMMENT: What is the weighting used in the suitability maps for biological, geologic, soils, social and management access?

RESPONSE: During the advisory committee process, presentations were developed showing the low, medium and high weighting values given to each criteria. WDFW biologists, WADNR geologists, and region staff helped develop the suitability maps based on local knowledge and existing data. The scientific team developed presentations for the advisory committee to aid in discussions of alternatives. These presentations are available on the DNR website with the monthly notes of materials used to build the suitability mapping. The Recreation Plan only shows the final maps built upon from the earlier meetings.

COMMENT: How are low, moderate and high-density trail areas designed?

RESPONSE: The recreation plan balances the suitability for trails with existing use patterns. In the high-density trail area, you have the most unique rock formations, easier trail access and the ability to connect trails across Cle Elum ridge. The moderate-density trail area is less suitable for trail development but you still can connect vistas, trailheads and camping areas for a more remote cross-country trail experience. The low-density trail area has terrain features that can limit trail development. Once initiated, site-specific trail planning will include a survey of existing user-constructed trails where there are many duplicate route to similar locations. After site-specific planning, a more sustainable trail network will be developed.

COMMENT: It is important to link monitoring with responsiveness to action in the Plan.

RESPONSE: The recreation plan becomes a chapter of the 2015 Teanaway Community Forest Management Plan. The Management Plan implementation chapter, on page 71, describes the adaptive management strategies that will ensure monitoring with responsiveness.