



Chapter 5:

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION



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The *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) regulations require an “early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action” (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1501.7). This section includes a description of the public involvement process and describes the consultation that occurred during development of this *North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (draft plan/EIS), including consultation with tribes, scientific experts, and other agencies. This chapter also includes a list of the recipients of the draft plan/EIS.

HISTORY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public involvement activities for this draft plan/EIS fulfill the requirements of NEPA and the U.S. Department of the Interior regulations for implementing NEPA, including 43 CFR 46.235 and 43 CFR 46.435.

The Scoping Process

The interdisciplinary project team divided the scoping process for this draft plan/EIS into two parts: internal scoping and external or public scoping. Internal scoping involved discussions among the project team regarding the purpose of and need for management actions, issues, management alternatives, mitigation measures, the area of analysis, appropriate level of documentation, available references and guidance, and other related topics.

Public scoping is the early involvement of the interested and affected public in the environmental analysis process. The public scoping process helps ensure that people have an opportunity to comment and contribute early in the decision-making process. For this draft plan/EIS, project information was made available to individuals, agencies, and organizations early in the scoping process, and opportunities were provided to express concerns or views and to identify important issues or alternatives.

Taken together, internal and public scoping are essential elements of the NEPA planning process. The following sections describe the various ways scoping was conducted for this draft plan/EIS.

Internal Scoping

A two-day internal scoping meeting was held on October 21 and 22, 2014, to discuss the development of a grizzly bear restoration draft plan/EIS for the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE). During the meeting, the lead agencies, the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the cooperating agencies, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), identified the purpose of and need for action, management objectives, issues, and impact topics, and preliminary alternative approaches. Cooperating agency roles and involvement and the public scoping process were also discussed. The results of the meetings were captured in a report that is part of the decision file for this draft plan/EIS.

Public Scoping

Public scoping was conducted in February and March of 2015. The publication of a Notice of Intent to prepare the draft plan/EIS in the *Federal Register* (FR) on February 19, 2015 (80 FR 33), marked the start of the public scoping period. In addition to the Notice of Intent, preliminary information regarding the

draft plan/EIS was provided to the public and other interested parties through a press release (sent to 700 media outlets) and a public scoping letter (sent to 4,030 interested individuals and organizations). Information was also provided to an additional 2,793 individuals and organizations via email. These announcements notified the public of public scoping open houses and of the opportunity to provide comments on the draft plan/EIS.

The public scoping comment period was open for a total of six weeks between February 13, 2015, and March 26, 2015. During this time, six public scoping open houses were held at the following locations:

- March 3, 2015: Red Barn Main Hall, Winthrop, Washington
- March 4, 2015: Okanogan PUD Meeting Room, Okanogan, Washington
- March 5, 2015: Chelan County PUD Auditorium, Wenatchee, Washington
- March 9, 2015: Putnam Centennial Center Meeting Room, Cle Elum, Washington
- March 10, 2015: Seattle Pacific University Bertona Classroom 1, Seattle, Washington
- March 11, 2015: Bellingham Central Library Lecture Room, Bellingham, Washington

Approximately 495 people attended the six meetings (approximately 80 people attended the meeting in Winthrop, approximately 80 people attended the meeting in Okanogan, approximately 40 people attended the meeting in Wenatchee, approximately 70 people attended the meeting in Cle Elum, approximately 115 people attended the meeting in Seattle, and approximately 110 people attended the meeting in Bellingham).

At each meeting, handouts were available that included information about the background of the project, proposed purpose and need, proposed plan objectives, potential impact topics, NEPA process, and commonly asked questions. This information was also displayed on banners at each meeting venue. NPS and FWS personnel, as well as staff from the USFS and WDFW, were available to answer questions and provide additional information to open house attendees.

Writing stations available at each meeting provided areas where attendees could sit, write comments, and submit a comment form into a box. Attendees who prepared written comments before the meeting could submit those comments using the comment box provided. Attendees had the option to take comment forms and mail them later. Attendees were also encouraged to submit their comments online and were provided information on how to provide comments through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website was provided.

During the scoping period, 2,881 pieces of correspondence were received. Following the public scoping period, the NPS reviewed all public comments and a Comment Analysis Report was developed to compile and correlate similar public comments into a format useable by the decision-makers and the planning team. The Comment Analysis Report provides assistance in organizing, clarifying, and addressing technical information pursuant to NEPA regulations and in identifying the topics and issues to be evaluated and considered throughout the planning process. All scoping comments were considered to be important and useful guidance in the draft plan/EIS process.

AGENCY CONSULTATION

U.S. Forest Service

The USFS is a cooperating agency for this draft plan/EIS process and has participated in internal planning meetings, including the internal scoping and alternatives development meetings. The USFS has also contributed to the development of this draft plan/EIS in describing the affected environment, addressing potential impacts that could result from actions in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, and providing the information necessary to support a USFS decision related to this draft plan/EIS (see appendix B).

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

The WDFW is a cooperating agency for this draft plan/EIS process and has participated in internal planning meetings, including the internal scoping and alternatives development meetings. The WDFW has also contributed to the development of this draft plan/EIS by describing the affected environment, addressing potential impacts, and discussing the NPS and FWS actions in relation to the state statute. In addition, the North Cascades National Park Service Complex Superintendent and the Supervisor of the FWS Washington Fish and Wildlife Office conducted an in-person briefing with the WDFW Director on May 4, 2016.

Washington State Historic Preservation Office

In accordance with section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act*, consultation with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation concerning impacts on cultural resources will be initiated by the NPS and FWS during public and agency review of the draft plan/EIS. A copy of the draft plan/EIS will be provided to the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation along with a letter requesting any initial concerns or issues relating to the draft plan/EIS and its potential effects on historic properties within the park.

TRIBAL TREATIES AND CONSULTATION

Tribal Treaties. The park recognizes that the tribes' relationship to lands in the NCE have endured for thousands of years, and NPS and FWS staff continue to work with tribes to ensure that sites of traditional importance are preserved and protected. NPS and FWS staff strive to create and maintain positive, productive, government-to-government relationships with these tribes (NPS 2008a).

Tribal Consultation. During scoping, letters were sent to U.S. federally recognized tribes having an association with the NCE (the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Lummi Nation, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Nooksack Indian Tribe, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, Snoqualmie Tribe, Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Tulalip Tribes, Upper Skagit Tribe, and Yakama Indian Nation). Scoping comment letters were received from the Lummi Nation, the Okanogan Nation Alliance, and the Upper Columbia United Tribes, expressing support for the project. On April 23, 2015, NPS and FWS officials conducted an in-person meeting with leaders of the Upper Skagit Tribe to discuss the draft plan/EIS.

An updated tribal outreach letter was sent on May 17, 2016, to an expanded list of tribes to broaden the scope of tribal outreach for this draft plan/EIS. The expanded list included the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Hoh Tribe, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Lummi Indian

Nation, Makah Indian Tribe, Muckleshoot Tribe, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Nooksack Indian Tribe, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Puyallup Tribe, Quileute Tribe, Quinault Indian Nation, Samish Indian Nation, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, Shoalwater Bay Tribe, Skokomish Tribe, Snoqualmie Tribe, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Squaxin Island Tribe, Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, Suquamish Tribe, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Tulalip Tribes, Upper Skagit Tribe, and the Yakama Nation. A subsequent outreach letter was sent to the cultural resource contacts for all Washington tribes on September 14, 2016. Replies were received from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Muckleshoot Tribe. Several tribes requested in-person meetings. A meeting was held with the Swinomish and Lummi tribes on July 26, 2016; the Upper Skagit Tribe on April 23, 2015; and the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe on November 18, 2016. A conference call with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation was held on August 4, 2016. Tribes will also be notified of the availability of this draft plan/EIS upon its publication.

CONSULTATION WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE OFFICIALS

The NPS and FWS have initiated outreach to members of the Washington federal Senate and Congressional delegations and members of the state legislature and will conduct further outreach via letters and briefings in advance of the release of the draft plan/EIS. The NPS and FWS provided in-person briefings to federal and state legislative officials on the following occasions:

- March 11, 2015: Staff – Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell (NPS and FWS)
- March 16, 2015: Staff – Congresswoman Jaime Herrera-Buetler (NPS and FWS)
- April 29, 2015: Sharra Finley, aide to Congressman Dan Newhouse (NPS and FWS)
- May 5, 2015: Washington State Senate Natural Resources/Parks Committee hearing (NPS, FWS, and WDFW)
- June 13, 2016: Staff – Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (NPS)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The NPS and FWS initiated outreach to county governments prior to publication of the Notice of Intent with the mailing of consultation letters offering to meet with county officials to discuss the draft plan/EIS process, and will conduct further outreach to local government officials upon publication the draft plan/EIS. Letters were mailed prior to publication of the Notice of Intent to the following 13 county councils and commissioners' offices in central and western Washington: the Chelan County Commissioners' Office; Douglas County Commissioners' Office; Grant County Commissioners' Office; King County Council; Kittitas County Commissioners' Office; Lewis County Commissioners' Office; Okanogan County Commissioners' Office; Pierce County Council; Skagit County Commissioners' Office; Snohomish County Council; Thurston County Commissioners Office; Whatcom County Council; and the Yakima County Commissioners' Office.

The NPS and FWS have conducted in-person briefings about the draft plan/EIS with county and local government officials on six separate occasions, as follows:

- January 12, 2015: Okanogan County Commissioners (NPS, FWS, and USFS)
- March 16, 2015: Pierce County Commissioners (NPS and FWS)
- March 24, 2015: Lewis County Commissioners (NPS and FWS)

- June 9, 2015: Skagit County Commissioners (NPS and FWS)
- March 14, 2016: Skagit County Commissioner Lisa Janicki and government representatives from the towns of Hamilton, Concrete, and Lyman (NPS and FWS)
- March 24, 2016: Sedro-Woolley mayor Keith Wagoner (NPS)

LIST OF RECIPIENTS OF THE PLAN / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Upon publication of the notice of availability of the draft plan/EIS in the *Federal Register*, a news release will be provided to the 700 media outlets who received the news release announcing the Notice of Intent in February of 2015. Notice will be provided to media, interested individuals, and organizations via the NPS and FWS standard mailing /distribution lists, as well as the following:

- The NPS and FWS will use the lists generated from the public scoping meetings and the online signup on the <https://www.nps.gov/noca/grizzly.htm> page.
- The NPS and FWS will use the email addresses generated from the nce_grizzly@nps.gov email address.
- The FWS will use its news distribution service (Meltwater) to share the news release with instructions on accessing the draft plan/EIS with local (Washington), regional and national media.
- The NPS and FWS will contact state and federal agency partners, tribes, county commissioners, Congressional members' offices, state legislators (in cooperation with the WDFW), local non-governmental organizations, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC), and other potential stakeholders electronically with the news release, along with instructions on accessing the draft plan/EIS.
- The news release will be posted on the FWS State (Washington) and Regional websites with links and information on accessing the draft plan/EIS.

Hard copies of the draft plan/EIS will be distributed to the following agencies and libraries:

Government Agencies

- United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 10
- United States Department of Agriculture
 - United States Forest Service: Pacific Northwest Region
- Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
- Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Local Libraries

- Bellingham Central Library
- Cashmere Library
- Cle Elum Central Library
- Darrington Library
- Everett Public Library
- King County Library System
- Mount Vernon Library
- Okanogan Library

- Omak Library
- Renton Public Library
- Seattle Public Library
- Sedro-Woolley Library
- Sultan Library
- Tacoma Public Library
- Twisp Library
- University of Washington Library
- Wenatchee Public Library
- Winthrop Library

LIST OF PREPARERS AND CONSULTANTS

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