



# Public Services

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VERN M. REDIFER, P.E. - Director

DATE: August 10, 2018  
TO: Yakima County Water Resources Division and Interested Agencies  
FROM: Thomas Carroll—Environmental Planning Section Manager  
SUBJ: SEP2018-00031  
Notice of Decision & Final Threshold Determination

Enclosed is the Final Threshold Determination - Determination of Non-Significance for the Upper Yakima River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan – 2018 Cowiche Addendum. We have determined that the adoption of the plan will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. Please review the attached documents for information on conditions of approval, and your appeal options. If you have any questions on the project or the appeal process, please contact Byron Gumz, Senior Project Planner, at (509) 574-2300.

Encl.: Threshold Determination - DNS  
Agency Comments


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Control\_Zone\_District\_CMINP\_Update\_Final\_DNS\_Ejg.docx

*Yakima County ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding Yakima County's Title VI Program, you may contact the Title VI Coordinator at 509-574-2300.*

*If this letter pertains to a meeting and you need special accommodations, please call us at 509-574-2300 by 10:00 a.m. three days prior to the meeting. For TDD users, please use the State's toll free relay service 1-800-833-6388 and ask the operator to dial 509-574-2300.*

**FINAL**  
**DETERMINATION OF NON-SIGNIFICANCE**  
(Notice of Action)

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1. **Description of Proposal:** The Yakima County Water Resources Division has updated the Upper Yakima River Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan to address recent flooding issues near the confluence of Cowiche Creek and the Naches River.
2. **File Number:** SEP2018-00031
3. **Proponent:** Yakima County Water Resources Division  
Attn: Terry Keenhan  
Yakima County Courthouse – Fourth Floor  
128 North 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
Yakima, WA 98901
4. **Location of Proposal:** Portions of the Cities of Yakima, Selah, Union Gap, and unincorporated Yakima County.
5. **Lead Agency:** Yakima County Planning Division
6. **Determination:** The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after a careful review of the completed environmental checklist, and other information on file with the lead agency. This information (including all environmental documentation) is available to the public on request and can be examined in our offices during regular business hours or online at [www.yakimap.com/permits](http://www.yakimap.com/permits). Environmental documents include the SEPA checklist, this threshold determination, and submittal materials.
7. **Comment and Appeal Information:** This Final DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-355. There is no further comment on it. You may appeal this SEPA threshold determination to the Yakima County Hearings Examiner within 14 days. For information on the comment or appeal processes, or on other issues relating to this proposal, contact Byron Gumz, Senior Project Planner, at (509) 574-2300.
8. **SEPA Responsible Official:** Lynn Deitrick, AICP
9. **Designee:**   
Thomas Carroll
10. **Address:** 128 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St.,  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Courthouse,  
Yakima, WA 98901
11. **Date:** August 10, 2018



State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

South Central Region • Region 3 • 1701 South 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720  
Telephone: (509) 575-2740 • Fax: (509) 575-2474

July 25, 2018

Yakima County Planning Division  
Attn: Byron Gumz  
128 N 2nd Street  
Fourth Floor / Courthouse  
Yakima, WA 98901

**Subject: WDFW Comments on SEP2018-00031, Upper Yakima River Comprehensive Flood Management Plan – 2018 Cowiche Addendum, Yakima County**

Dear Byron,

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed the above-referenced State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) document, and checklist received on July 23, 2018, and offers the following comments at this time. Other comments may be offered as the project progresses.

Under the subheading "Lower Cowiche Channel Relocation Project" (page 27): We recommend the proponents ensure that the 150 ft. buffer isn't unnecessarily bounded by dikes/levees. Dikes/levees, if needed, can be built considerable distances (>75 ft) away from the buffer to allow shallow flood flow over open space and ag land to facilitate floodplain storage and infiltration.

Under the subheading "New Cowiche Creek 100-Year Long Term Levees upstream of US 12" (page 61): The facilities might best be sized such that the long-term average cleanout return interval at any discreet cleanout location is around 10 or more years. This interval allows some intervening regrowth of hardwood trees to provide varied ecological services.

Under the subheading "Lower Cowiche Creek Reconstruction downstream of US 12" (page 62): It is okay for the channel bed to be 3-4 feet lower than what exists now. However, much of the floodplain should be situated or excavated so as to be hydrologically connected and allow natural regeneration of woody riparian plants.

It is a concern that well-developed riparian corridors and public access lack mutual compatibility where providing more public access leverages the fire risk. Burned areas along local rivers and Yakima Greenway are pervasive. Solutions to that matter have not yet been effective, with the situation actually worsened. Thus providing more Greenway-like access presents a threat to Plan goals. It is also conflicting that trail maintenance actions often also introduce the need to harden

Byron Gumz  
Comments on SEP2018-00031  
July 25, 2018  
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areas of floodplain, thereby reducing off-channel habitats and their related ecological processes. Trails in woodlands also foster the felling of so-called "Danger Trees" and thereby further diminish natural functions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or clarifications you may require. My phone number is 457-9310.

Sincerely,



Eric Bartrand

Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Area Habitat Biologist  
1701 S 24th Avenue  
Yakima, WA 98902

EB:eb

Ecc: Terry Keenhan, Water Resources Division