

Environmental Assessment for Recreational Hunting at Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery

June 2020

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to evaluate the effects associated with this proposed action and complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500-1509) and Department of the Interior (43 CFR 46; 516 DM 8) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (550 FW 3) regulations and policies. NEPA requires examination of the effects of proposed actions on the natural and human environment.

Proposed Action:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to open hunting opportunities for big game and upland game on the Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery (NFH) in accordance with State of Washington hunting regulations and the Spring Creek NFH Hunting Plan. The need of the proposed action is to meet the Service's priorities and mandates as outlined by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to "recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general uses of the Federal Lands and "ensure that opportunities are provided within the National Fish Hatchery system for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation."

This proposed action is often iterative and evolves over time during the process as the agency refines its proposal and learns more from the public, Tribes, and other agencies. Therefore, the final proposed action may be different from the original. The final decision on the proposed action was made at the conclusion of the public comment period for this EA. The proposed action was not changed in response to public comment, although this EA was edited to provide more clarity in response to public comment.

Background:

Spring Creek NFH is guided by the goals and objectives of the *Strategic Plan for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program: FY2016-2020* (USFWS 2016), the mission and goals of the National Fish Hatchery System (NFHS), the authorized purposes of the hatchery, and Service policy, laws and international treaties.

Spring Creek NFH consists of the Main Hatchery Area in Skamania County, Washington and the nearby auxiliary Big White Ponds Area in Klickitat County, Washington. Both sites are contained within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the general area around Spring Creek NFH. The hatchery's location is denoted by the red star.

Spring Creek NFH's main facility is located at RM 167 along the north (Washington) shore of the Columbia River, 20 miles upstream of Bonneville Dam and approximately two miles downstream of the mouth of the White Salmon River. The auxiliary Big White Ponds Area is located along the eastern shore of the White Salmon River approximately 1.5 miles upstream of the Columbia River confluence (Figure 2).

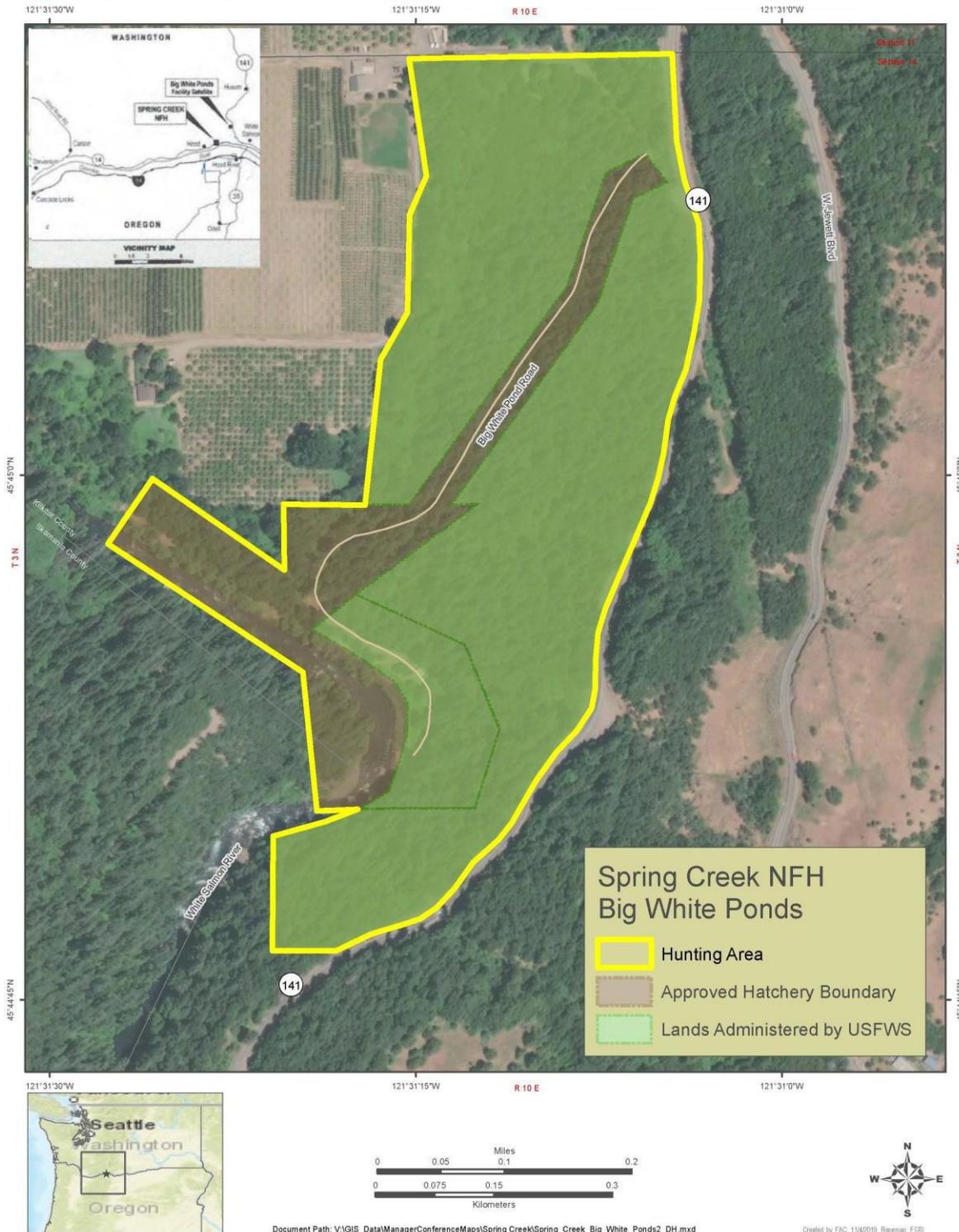


Figure 2. Area open to hunting at Spring Creek NFH Big White Ponds Area

The facility was authorized by Special Act 24 Stat. 523, March 03, 1887, and Special Act 30 Stat. 612, July 01, 1898, and placed into operation in September 1901 to support the commercial fishing industry in the Columbia River. The hatchery was reauthorized by the Mitchell Act (16 USC 755-757; 52 Stat. 345) May 11, 1938, as amended on August 8, 1946, (60 Stat. 932) for mitigation of Bonneville Dam and conservation of fishery resources in the Columbia River Basin. The hatchery was remodeled in 1938 to prevent inundation by the pool behind Bonneville Dam. The hatchery was again remodeled in 1970 to expand operations to meet commitments under the John Day Dam Mitigation Act. The hatchery is currently propagating Tule fall Chinook salmon and includes adult broodstock collection, egg incubation, juvenile rearing, and an annual on-station release of 15.1 million sub-yearling smolts.

National Fish Hatchery lands are maintained for the fundamental purpose of propagating and distributing fish and other aquatic animal life and managed for the protection of all species of wildlife (50 CFR Ch.1 70.1).

It is a priority of the Service to provide for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing, when those opportunities are compatible with the purposes for which the hatchery was established and the mission of the Service.

The Big White Ponds Area of Spring Creek NFH (approximately 50 acres) will be open to hunting of bear, bobcat, crow, black-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, grouse, partridge, porcupine, and wild turkey as outlined in the State of Washington hunting regulations. Where allowed, hunting on the hatchery follows the season dates and bag limits outlined in the State of Washington regulations. This consistency with the state helps reduce confusion when hunters participate in hunting activities on Service lands.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

The purpose of this proposed action is to provide compatible wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities on Spring Creek NFH.

The need of the proposed action is to meet the Service's priorities and mandates as outlined by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to "recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general uses of the Federal Lands and "ensure that opportunities are provided within the National Fish Hatchery system for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation."

This EA is being prepared to evaluate the effects associated with this proposed action and complies with NEPA in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1509) and Department of the Interior (43 CFR 46; 516 DM 8) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (550 FW 3) regulations and policies. The NEPA requires examination of the effects of proposed actions on the natural and human environment.

The objectives of hunting program on Spring Creek NFH are to provide:

- The public with an opportunity to experience, recreationally, wildlife on more hatchery lands and increase opportunities for hunters.

- Biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands.
- Wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

Alternatives Considered

Alternative A: Open the hatchery to hunting in accordance with State of Washington Hunting Season and Regulations (Preferred Alternative)

The hatchery has prepared a hunt plan (Appendix B), which is presented in this document as the Proposed Action Alternative.

The Big White Ponds Area of Spring Creek NFH (approximately 50 acres) will be open to hunting of bear, bobcat, crow, black-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, grouse, partridge, porcupine, and wild turkey as outlined in the State of Washington hunting regulations. Where allowed, hunting on the hatchery follows the season dates and bag limits outlined in the State of Washington regulations. This consistency with the state helps reduce confusion when hunters participate in hunting activities on Service lands.

Species to be Taken, Hunting Periods, Hunting Access

Hunting will be allowed for bear, bobcat, crow, black-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, grouse, partridge, porcupine, and wild turkey in accordance with State of Washington hunting regulations and listed in the Spring Creek NFH Hunt Plan.

Mitigation Measures to Avoid Conflicts

The Service would continually monitor for conflicts and evaluate mitigation measures that may be necessary to solve or to minimize conflicts between users. The Big White Ponds Area is currently open to fishing. If conflicts are documented between hunters and anglers, the Service will develop measures to minimize those and any future conflicts. At this time, the Service believes that due to the location and minimal use of the area, any conflict with hunting will be minimal to non-existent.

Implementation of this alternative will meet the Service's priorities and mandates as outlined by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to "recognize compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses as the priority general uses of the Federal Lands and "ensure that opportunities are provided within the National Fish Hatchery system for compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting.

Hunting and all associated program activities proposed in the Spring Creek NFH Hunting Plan are compatible with the purpose of the hatchery as outlined in the (50 CFR Ch.1 71.1) "Opening of National Fish Hatchery Areas to Hunting: National fish hatchery areas may be opened to hunting wildlife when such activity is not detrimental to the propagation and distribution of fish or other aquatic wildlife."

Alternative B: Hatchery will remain closed to hunting

No action would be taken by the Service to open hatchery lands to hunting. Under the no hunting action alternative, the Service would operate the hatchery as usual; however, hunting would not be allowed.

Affected Environment

Spring Creek NFH consists of approximately 90 acres of relatively intact prairie-oak habitats that are quite rare within the Columbia River Gorge. These habitats are dominated by Oregon white oak, but also have ponderosa pine, California black oak, Douglas-fir, and canyon live oak (Brincken 2009). In general, the understory is relatively open with shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers (Brincken 2009). The tree canopy of these oak woodlands obscures 30-70 percent of the sky (Brincken 2009). Oak habitats are typically maintained through periodic, low-intensity fire, which removes small conifers and maintains a moderate cover of low shrubs (Brincken 2009).

The Columbia River Gorge is a canyon of the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest of great scenic and recreational value, hence its designation as a National Scenic Area. The canyon is up to 4,000 feet deep and stretches over 80 miles from the eastern reaches of the Portland metropolitan area to roughly the confluence of the Columbia with the Deschutes River, along the way bisecting the Cascade Range. The river and gorge form the boundary between the states of Washington to the north and Oregon to the south.

Tables 1-5 provide additional, brief descriptions of each resource present in the vicinity of Spring Creek NFH.

Environmental Consequences of the Action

This section analyzes the environmental consequences of the action on each affected resource, including direct and indirect effects. This EA only includes the written analyses of the environmental consequences on a resource when the impacts on that resource could be more than negligible and therefore considered an “affected resource”. Any resources that will not be more than negligibly impacted by the action have been dismissed from further analyses.

Tables 1-4 provide:

1. A brief description of the affected resources in the proposed action area;
2. Impacts of the proposed action and any alternatives on those resources, including direct and indirect effects.

Table 5 provides a brief description of the cumulative impacts of the proposed action and any alternatives.

Impact Types:

- *Direct effects* are those which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.
- *Indirect effects* are those which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.
- *Cumulative impacts* result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions.

TABLE 1. AFFECTED NATURAL RESOURCES AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED

Bear
<p>All descriptions of bear populations and harvest data are from WDFW (2018a). According to the WDFW 2018 Game Status and Trend Report, annual female black bear harvest in East Cascades Black Bear Management Unit (BBMU) averaged 30% of the population during the period from 2008 to 2017. These values varied from a low of 27% in 2012 to a high of 37% in 2009. There appears to be an increasing trend in the percentage of females harvested since the five-year average is over 33%. In 2018, an estimate 277 black bear were harvested within the East Cascades BBMU representing a hunter success rate of 6%. A total of 1,483 black bear were harvested statewide and those taken from the East Cascades BBMU accounted for 19% of the total.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to black bear hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.</p> <p>The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) annually sets harvest levels based on an analysis of previous years' harvest data. Take levels are not possible to forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with one to zero to bear harvested on the unit annually. This estimate is based on WDFW data and the professional judgement of the Regional Hunting and Fishing Chief. The estimate was confirmed as reasonable by local WDFW staff. Bear hunting/harvest would likely be incidental to pursuit of some other game animal (e.g., deer). This would have a minor effect on the overall bear population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population.</p> <p>Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no bear hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.</p>
Bobcat
<p>Bobcat are considered to be a common small game species by the WDFW. The statewide season runs from September 1 to March 15 with no bag limit. Successful hunters must contact a WDFW Office for pelt sealing and to submit the associated harvest report to the Department by April 20. Bobcat may not be hunted with dogs.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to bobcat hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety</p>

of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

The WDFW annually sets harvest levels based on an analysis of previous years' harvest data. Take levels are not possible to forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with no bobcat harvested on the unit annually. This estimate is based on WDFW data and the professional judgement of the Regional Hunting and Fishing Chief. The estimate was confirmed as reasonable by local WDFW staff. Bobcat hunting/harvest would likely be incidental to pursuit of some other game animal (e.g., deer). This would have a minor effect on the overall bobcat population, as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no bobcat hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Crow

Crow are considered to be a common upland game bird species by the WDFW. The statewide season runs from September 1 to December 31 with no bag limit.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to crow hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

Given the crow's abundance, WDFW does not monitor harvest or forecast take levels. The amount of harvest would be set annually by WDFW based on an analysis of previous years' harvest data. The Service expects hunting pressure to be light with very few crow harvested on the area annually. This would be a minor effect to the overall crow population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of crow.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no crow hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Deer

In 2018, 151 deer were harvest in GMU 578 (WDFW 2018b). The 2018 WDFW deer harvest report does not break deer out by species. According to the WDFW 2018 Game Status and Trend Report, the catch-per-unit efforts for black-tailed deer in the South Cascade Mountain Management Zone has increased slightly over the past decade. Estimates of black-tailed deer abundance and post-season ratio are not available for populations within this zone. The 2018 population estimate of mule deer and black-tailed deer in Washington was 90,000-110,000 for each species (WAFWA 2018).

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to mule deer and black-tailed deer hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

The amount of harvest would be set annually by WDFW based on an analysis of previous years' harvest data. Take levels are not possible to forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with few deer harvested on the unit annually. This would be a minor effect to the overall deer population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of deer.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no deer hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Elk

Elk herd descriptions and harvest data are taken from WDFW (2018a).

The hatchery is located within the range of the Mount St. Helens elk herd. The herd is located in southwest Washington and their area is comprised of 14 Game Management Units (GMUs) of which the hatchery occupies GMU 578. During 2017, 129 elk were harvested throughout GMU 578. Population trend monitoring by WDFW has been ongoing since 2009 in the core herd area (GMUs 520, 522, 524, 550, 556), outside of GMU 578. In March 2018, the estimated total elk abundance within the core elk herd was 1,865. Within the core herd area, the Mount St. Helen elk herd had been relatively stable until 2016-17 when abundance declined by roughly 33% due to the severe winter. However, recent estimated calf:cow ratios indicate calf recruitment levels that promote population growth or stability. In 2017, 1.07 elk from the Mount St Helens elk herd were harvested for every 100 hunter days pursuing elk. During 2017-2018, WDFW provided 36 permits to landowners to lethally take elk causing damage to agricultural crops and 29 elk were lethally removed.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to elk hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

The amount of harvest would be set annually by WDFW based on an analysis of previous years' harvest data. Take levels are not possible to forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with few elk harvested on the unit annually. This would be a minor effect to the overall elk population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of elk. Harvest of any elk on the hatchery may reduce elk depredation on private lands in the area, but the amount is not possible to forecast.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no elk hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Grouse

Forest grouse in Washington include dusky grouse, sooty grouse, ruffed grouse, and spruce grouse. These four species occur throughout forested lands in Washington. Dusky and sooty grouse were once collectively classified as Blue Grouse. The WDFW Game Management Plan (WDFW 2014) outlines three specific management objectives for forest grouse:

- Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage forest grouse and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
- Manage for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing, cultural and ceremonial uses by tribes, and photography.
- Manage statewide populations for sustained harvest

Estimated hunter numbers and harvest have declined from the historic highs of the 1970s and dropped sharply from 2009-2011, but leveled off during the following six-year period (WDFW 2018a). In 2017, the statewide harvest of 55,716 birds was down 2% from the 2016 harvest (WDFW 2018a) The current 10-year statewide harvest average is 73,300 birds, thus putting 2017 harvest numbers 24% below the 10-year average (WDFW 2018a). Harvest estimates continue to be closely tied to hunter participation (WDFW 2018a).

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to grouse hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

Currently, WDFW does not conduct statewide population surveys for forest grouse, rather a statewide harvest estimate (based on a mailed hunter questionnaire) is the indicator used for monitoring long-term population trends (WDFW 2018a). Take levels are not forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with few grouse harvested on the area annually. This would be a minor effect to the overall grouse population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of grouse.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no grouse hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Partridge

The WDFW Game Management Plan (WDFW 2014) outlines three specific management objectives for partridge:

- The statewide goals for partridge and other upland game birds are:
- Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage partridge and other upland game birds and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
- Manage partridge and other upland game birds for a variety of recreational, educational and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, wildlife viewing cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, and photography.
- Manage statewide partridge and other upland game bird populations for a sustained harvest.

In 2017, partridge harvest was estimated at 4,877 birds (WDFW 2018a). This is a 43% increase from 2016 and is 5% below the 10-year harvest average (WDFW 2018a). Gray partridge hunter participation increased 41% from 2016 with an estimated 1,886 hunters participating in 2017 (WDFW 2018a). Harvest and hunter effort have been used as an index to population trends. These data are estimated through post-season hunter surveys. Harvest trends suggest that partridge populations are stabilizing, but are below long-term (>10 year) averages (WDFW 2018a).

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to partridge hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

Currently, WDFW does not conduct statewide population surveys for partridge, rather statewide estimates of harvest and hunter effort (via post-season hunter surveys) are used as an index to population trends (WDFW 2018a). Take levels are not forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with few partridge harvested on the area annually. This would be a minor effect to the overall partridge population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of partridge.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no partridge hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Porcupine

Porcupine are not listed by WDFW as game animals or furbearers, but rather as “unclassified” wildlife that can be trapped or hunted year-round with no bag limits. The abundance of individual small game animals, furbearers, and unclassified wildlife is largely unknown. However, because these animals typically have high population growth rates and often experience compensatory mortality, the risk of over-exploitation is low. Biological data on individual species populations are limited and concern with regard to harvest effects on some populations exists.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) area of the hatchery to porcupine hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

There are no formal population surveys for small game mammals, furbearers, or unclassified wildlife. Trends in total harvest and catch-per-unit-effort, which are collected annually using a hunter questionnaire or mandatory “Trapper’s Report of Catch” form are used as a general indicator of population status and trend for some species (WDFW 2018a). Take levels are not forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with few porcupine harvested on the area annually. This would be a minor effect to the overall porcupine population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of porcupine.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no porcupine hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Wild Turkey

According to the WDFW 2018 Game Status and Trend Report, wild turkey harvest in PMU 35 has held steady over the past 7 years. In 2018 an estimated 457 turkeys were harvested in spring and 94 during the fall season in this PMU with a hunter success rate of 32% and 34%, respectively (WDFW 2018b). A total of 7,332 wild turkeys were harvested state-wide (WDFW 2018b). In 2017, PMU 35 contributed 9% to the overall state spring turkey harvest (WDFW 2019).

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): This alternative would open the Big White Ponds Area (50 acres) of the hatchery to wild turkey hunting. The objectives of the proposed hunt are to: provide additional wildlife-dependent recreational activity on the hatchery, provide biological diversity by preserving the natural diversity and variety of biotic communities occurring on hatchery lands, and provide wildlife-dependent public recreation as mandated by and according to Service law and policy.

The amount of harvest would be set annually by WDFW based on an analysis of previous years’ harvest data. Take levels are not possible to forecast, but based on the acreage of huntable land at the hatchery and hunting statistics from WDFW, the Service expects hunting pressure to be light with very few wild turkey harvested on the unit annually. Hunting on Big White Ponds Area of the hatchery would not have significant impact on the local or regional population of wild turkey because the percentage harvested would be a small fraction of the total statewide population of wild turkey.

This would be a minor effect to the overall wild turkey population as the harvest would be detectable but localized, small, and of little consequence to the statewide population of wild turkey.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B, no wild turkey hunting would occur on the hatchery. The Service would not open the hatchery to an additional wildlife-dependent recreation activity.

Other Wildlife Species

The hatchery supports a diversity of wildlife species of the Columbia Gorge, including game and nongame species, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates, which are important contributors to the overall biodiversity on the hatchery. Songbirds, raptors, shorebirds and waterfowl primarily utilize the hatchery as wintering and migratory habitat.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on wildlife and other aquatic species should be relatively insignificant. Populations of wildlife and aquatic species have varied widely since construction on the hatchery primarily due to major historical habitat alterations within the Columbia River Basin.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore impacts to non-target wildlife species caused by human disturbance would remain the same as at present.

Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Special Status Species

The Service’s Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool lists the endangered gray wolf, threatened Northern spotted owl, threatened yellow-billed cuckoo, threatened bull trout and its critical habitat, and the proposed-for-listing North American wolverine as probably present in the area of the proposed action. Additionally, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) lists the Lower Columbia River Chinook salmon, specifically those of the hatchery’s Tule Chinook Program, as being present in White Salmon River.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on threatened and endangered species and other special status species should be relatively insignificant due to their absence from the area, a lack of suitable habitat for them, and/or that they would not be encountered by hunters. Hunting activities should have absolutely no impact on aquatic species like bull trout or its critical habitat, or on the Lower Columbia River Chinook salmon population. Gray wolf occur in the state, but presently only in Eastern Washington and the Central Cascades, far removed from the proposed location. North American wolverine are present in the Northern Cascades, Northeast Washington, and the somewhat nearby Goat Rocks Wilderness, but they prefer alpine and subalpine habitats not present in the Big White Ponds Area. Similarly Northern spotted owl, which inhabit old growth forests, and yellow-billed cuckoo, which generally inhabit large cottonwood and willow riparian habitats are not known from the area and their preferred habitats are not present in the area to be opened for hunting.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore impacts to threatened and endangered species caused by human disturbance would remain the same as at present.

Vegetation (including vegetation of special management concern)

All descriptions of vegetation are from Brincken (2009).

Native vegetation in the Big White Ponds Area encompasses shrubby and herbaceous communities, as well as forested communities with varying canopy types. Scattered ponderosa pine and Oregon white oak are the main woodland species. The shrubby and herbaceous community includes scattered Oregon white oak, antelope bitterbrush, bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, elk sedge, lupine, and eriogonum.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on vegetation should be relatively insignificant. Public use of the open areas certainly impacts the amount and coverage of vegetation, but on a very small scale (i.e., trampling of vegetation, creation of social trails, etc.).

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore impacts to vegetation species caused by human activities would remain the same as at present.

Geology & Soils

All descriptions of geology and soils are from Brincken (2009).

The soils of the auxiliary Big White Ponds Area are predominantly of the Oreoke-Beeze Complex, 30 to 70 percent slope. This complex consists of very deep, well-drained soils formed in colluvium derived from basalt mixed with loess. Oreoke soils are on canyon side slopes and hillslopes. Slopes are 15 to 75 percent. The mean annual precipitation is about 18 inches and the mean annual temperature is about 48° F.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on geology and soils should be insignificant. Geology and soils were likely impacted during the initial construction phase and during subsequent major construction activities, but relatively light public access on such a robust resource should be minimal, if not negligible.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore impacts to the geology and soils caused by human activities would remain the same as at present.

Air Quality

The county around the Big White Ponds Area ranked in the 70th percentile for emissions of carbon monoxide, in the 60th percentile for sulphur dioxide emissions, in the 40th percentile for volatile organic compound emissions, and in the 30th percentile for nitrogen oxide emissions and air quality index (Scorecard 2011).

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on air quality should be insignificant. Emissions resulting from a relatively small number of hunter vehicles would likely be undetectable in relation to the extremely large amount of vehicle emissions associated with State Highway 14 and Interstate 84, the two major thoroughfares in the vicinity.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore impacts to air quality caused by human activities would remain the same as at present.

Water Resources

Although the area is relatively sparsely populated, Water Resources Inventory Area 29 is among the most densely farmed basins in southwestern Washington (WDE 2011). Furthermore, expected population increases, particularly in the city of Stevenson, combined with growing tourism from the burgeoning urban centers of Vancouver and Portland, have put a strain on the region's water resources (WDE 2011).

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on water resources should be insignificant. Water use by a relatively small number of hunters would likely be undetectable in relation to the large amount of domestic, agricultural and industrial use in the area.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore impacts to water resources caused by human activities would remain the same as at present.

Wetlands

Outside of small linear wetlands associated with the margins of the White Salmon River, there are no significant wetland areas on the Big White Ponds Area.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): N/A

Alternative B: N/A

Floodplains

There is very little floodplain associated with hatchery lands along the White Salmon Rivers.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): N/A

Alternative B: N/A

TABLE 2. AFFECTED VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE, AFFECTED CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND NO ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Visitor Use and Experience
<p>Recreational fishing is a popular sport on the Columbia River and the White Salmon River. Hunters and anglers are prohibited from entering the Big White Ponds Area via motorized vehicle due to the lack of parking near the river, and the slope and rugged nature of the road. A sign at the entrance gate clearly states that no public vehicles are allowed.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Conflicts between hunters and anglers are expected to be minimal due the small overlap in times when both groups would be accessing the area. Also, anglers would be clustered in riparian areas, whereas hunters would generally be pursuing their activities more away from or on the edge of these areas.</p> <p>Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore visitor use and experience would be unchanged.</p>
Cultural Resources
<p>Based on the records on file at the USFWS Cultural Resources Team office, four cultural resource identification efforts have been conducted within the Spring Creek NFH boundaries; however, only a portion of the hatchery has been subjected to pedestrian survey. There is one prehistoric archaeological site documented within the boundaries of Spring Creek NFH. Site 45SA384, a single panel pictograph on a basalt boulder, is located below a scree slope just west of a water collection structure associated with the hatchery. The site has been evaluated and determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).</p> <p>The hatchery is located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). As a result, Section 106 undertakings proposed by the Service are subject to all applicable requirements regarding consultation with the CRGNSA and interested tribes. The Service has a programmatic agreement (PA) in place with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the administration of routine undertakings. This PA requires that the Service regional historic preservation officer review undertakings and determine the appropriate path for Section 106 compliance.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on cultural resources should be insignificant. The general public’s primary focus is on hunting, not searching for and disturbing cultural resources. As a result, the vast majority of anticipated impacts would likely be accidental and trivial. Savvy persons would have access to a number of cultural resources, so there is potential for disturbance and pilfering.</p> <p>Alternative B: Under Alternative B no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore effect on cultural resources would be unchanged.</p>

TABLE 3. AFFECTED HATCHERY MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND NO ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Land Use
<p>The majority of the lands within the Spring Creek NFH are undeveloped natural areas. Infrastructure for the Main Hatchery Area is located within a narrow band of land next to the Columbia River. The Big White Ponds Area is essentially an undeveloped natural area that can be accessed by State Highway 141 Alternate. Parking is available along this road’s shoulder. Access to the property is through a gate on the west side of State Highway 141 Alternate.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): No additional infrastructure would be built to accommodate the proposed hunts. Vehicle traffic may increase slightly due to the proposed hunts, but hunters would be required to use existing access points, roads, and parking areas. Off-road vehicles would continue to be prohibited. Should conflicts develop in the future, the Service would change the programs to minimize conflicts and ensure public safety. To avoid potential conflicts, the hatchery would implement the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain boundary and hunting area signs to clearly define the designated hunting areas; • Allow vehicle traffic only on designated roads and parking areas; • Install signs in parking areas to allow only pedestrian hunter access to hunting areas; • Manage the hunts in strict accordance with all applicable federal laws (50 CFR Subchapter C), and consistent with applicable state laws; and • Field checks for compliance with regulations would be conducted by Service and WDFW law enforcement officers during routine patrols <p>Alternative B: No hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore existing land use and infrastructure would remain the same as at present, and impacts to the hatchery’s lands and infrastructure would remain the same as at present.</p>
Hatchery Administration
<p>The Spring Creek NFH is part of the Columbia River Gorge National Fish Hatchery Complex and has an authorized staffing level of six full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The FY 2018 budget to support facility operations was \$1.07M.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on hatchery administration are insignificant. No dedicated FTEs are assigned to public access and the only administrative duties would be to post and enforce hatchery-specific hunting and access regulations.</p> <p>Alternative B: No hunting would occur on the hatchery; staffing and funding devoted to hunting programs would remain unchanged.</p>

TABLE 4. AFFECTED SOCIOECONOMICS AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND NO ACTION ALTERNATIVES

<p>Local and Regional Economies</p>
<p>The Big White Ponds Area of the Spring Creek NFH is located on the east side of the White Salmon River in Klickitat County, Washington, 66 miles east of Portland, Oregon (population: 2.35M) and 4 miles northwest of White Salmon, Washington. According to USDA (2017), Klickitat County’s economy is based primarily in manufacturing and agriculture, and boasts a diverse range of agricultural products it produces. In the western portion of the county, orchards, fruit packing, and wood product production dominate the local economy, while the eastern portion mainly relies on vegetable farming and wineries (USDA 2017).</p> <p>Within the State of Washington it is estimated that there were just over 179,000 individual paid hunting license holders in 2019 (USFWS 2019) or about 2.4% of the state’s population.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): The small number of additional hunters expected to participate in these hunts would likely buy gas at local service stations and meals from local restaurants. Relative to the size of the local economy, these effects would be negligible.</p> <p>Alternative B: Under this alternative, no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore, current public uses of the hatchery would continue. Economic impacts to the local and regional economy from hatchery visitation would remain at current levels.</p>
<p>Agricultural Practices and Safety Issues</p>
<p>Klickitat County boasts a diverse range of agricultural products it produces. In the western portion of the county, orchards, fruit packing, and wood product production dominate the local economy, while the eastern portion mainly relies on vegetable farming and wineries (USDA 2017).</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): As a result of the deer, elk, and wild turkey hunts, crop damage on adjacent farms would be expected to decrease slightly, as would the number of vehicle collisions and the amount of browsing on native and cultivated vegetation.</p> <p>Alternative B: Under this alternative, no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore, current agricultural practices public uses would continue. Crop damage on adjacent farms would be expected to remain, as would the number of vehicle collisions and the amount of browsing on native and cultivated vegetation.</p>
<p>Environmental Justice</p>
<p>Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires all Federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action) and Alternative B: The Service has not identified any potentially high and adverse environmental or human health impacts from this proposed action. The Service has identified no minority or low income communities within the impact area. Minority or low-income communities will not be disproportionately affected by any impacts from this proposed action.</p>

Certain Sector of the Economy (e.g., Agricultural Practices)
The proposed action does not affect a certain sector of the economy. Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts Alternative A (Proposed Action): N/A Alternative B: N/A

Cumulative Impact Analysis:

Cumulative impacts are defined as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7).

TABLE 5. ANTICIPATED CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND NO ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Other Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Activity Impacting Affected Environment	Descriptions of Anticipated Cumulative Impacts	
	ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B
<p>Hunting Population estimates of huntable species are developed at a regional, state, and continental scale. Hunting frameworks and take limits are set based upon these estimates. The proposed hatchery hunting program rules will conform to hunting regulations in the State of Washington that have been set for GMU 35. By maintaining hunting regulations that are the same as or more restrictive than the state, individual hatcheries ensure that they are maintaining seasons which are supportive of management on a more regional basis. Such an approach also provides consistency with large-scale population status and objectives.</p>	<p>The hatchery would consistently coordinate with the state about the hunting program. Under the proposed action alternative, the hatchery would allow the harvest of game species on the Big White Ponds Area in accordance with State of Washington season, method of take, and bag limits.</p> <p>The proposed hunts here and on nearby NFH facilities would have a negligible effect on regional and statewide wildlife populations. Wildlife management of populations is important to ensure the health of the ecosystem, and the hatchery’s hunt program, and those of nearby NFH facilities, provide minor, additional beneficial impacts to the cumulative impacts of wildlife management in the state.</p> <p>As a result, changes or additions to hunting on the hatchery and nearby NFH facilities will have minor effects on wildlife species in Washington. Although the Preferred Alternative would increase hunting opportunities compared to the No Action Alternative, the slight increase in hunter activity will not rise to a significant cumulative effect locally, regionally, or nationally.</p>	<p>Under this alternative no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore cumulative impacts to game populations would remain the same.</p>

	ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B
<p>Other wildlife-dependent recreation (i.e., road and trail development and use)</p> <p>Spring Creek NFH is located in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. As such, outdoor-based recreation is an important socio-economic driver in the local area.</p>	<p>Access to additional areas for hunting will likely increase associated opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, but this increase is insignificant when compared to the total amount of wildlife-dependent recreation that takes place in the entire Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.</p>	<p>Under this alternative, no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore, current public uses of the hatchery would continue. The associated opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation should remain the same.</p>
<p>Development and Population Increase</p> <p>The Big White Ponds Area is located in Klickitat County, Washington. The County’s population in 2017 was estimated at 21,811 with a growth rate of 2.37% in the past year according to the most recent United States census data (Frey 2018).</p>	<p>The 2017 population growth rate in Klickitat County was higher than the 2018 national average of 0.62% (Frey 2018), so it can be speculated that the number of people hunting at the hatchery will increase over time. This increase will effectively be very small considering that the higher growth percentage is applied to a population of only about 12,000 individuals. Given that only about 2.4% of the Pacific Northwest’s population participates in hunting activities (USFWS 2018), the actual increase in hunters will be insignificant.</p>	<p>Under this alternative, no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore, changes in current development and population increase levels would be unaffected by additional hunting or hunting access.</p>
<p>Agricultural land uses</p> <p>Agricultural production is a fairly large part of the local Skamania County economy. According to USDA (2017), there were 750 farms in the county, covering 573,730 acres.</p> <p>The economic history of the Klickitat County includes sheep and cattle raising, wheat, orchards, timber, and aluminum (Bailey 2017). Klickitat County has three distinct economic regions. The western third of the county relies on advanced manufacturing, orchards and fruit packing, and wood products (Bailey 2017).</p>	<p>The current use of the area surrounding the hatchery is expected to continue and hunting access should in no way contribute to any changes in agricultural land uses.</p>	<p>Under this alternative, no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore, changes in current agricultural land use would be unaffected by additional hunting or hunting access.</p>

	ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B
<p>The eastern third is dominated by vegetable farming and increasing numbers of wineries, as well as the Roosevelt regional landfill (Bailey 2017). The central third boasts the county seat, Goldendale, the Maryhill Museum, windsurfing and kite boarding beaches, as well as the now-shuttered aluminum smelter (Bailey 2017).</p>		
<p>Lead</p> <p>There is a concern about the bioavailability of spent lead ammunition (bullets) on the environment, endangered and threatened species, birds (especially raptors), mammals, and humans or other fish and wildlife susceptible to biomagnification. Lead shot and bullet fragments found in animal carcasses and gut piles are the most likely source of lead exposure. (Kelly et al. 2011). Many hunters do not realize that the carcass or gut pile they leave in the field usually contains lead bullet fragments. Research continues on the effects of lead ammunition and the fragments it can deposit in harvested game. Avian predators and scavengers can be susceptible to lead poisoning when they ingest lead fragments or pellets in the tissues of animals killed or wounded by lead ammunition. Lead poison may weaken raptors and increase mortality rate by leaving them unable to hunt or more susceptible to vehicles or power line accidents (Kramer and Redig 1997). In a study of bald eagles and golden eagles admitted to the Raptor Rehabilitation Program, College of Veterinary Medicine, at Washington State University from 1991 to 2008, it was found that 48% of bald eagles and 62% of golden eagles tested had blood lead levels considered toxic by current standards. Of the bald and golden eagles with toxic lead levels, 91% (bald) and 58% (golden) respectively, were admitted to the rehabilitation facility after the end of</p>	<p>Opening hunting access on the facility could possibly increase the amount of lead ammunition use, but this use would be a tiny addition to the overall lead ammunition used in the State of Washington.</p>	<p>Under this alternative, no public hunting would occur on the facility; therefore, current levels of use of lead ammunition would remain unchanged.</p>

<p>the general deer and elk hunting seasons in December (Stauber 2010). Additionally, recent studies have found that wildlife hunted with lead ammunition can increase risks to human health due to the ingestion of lead (Hunt et. al 2009). While no lead poisoning of humans has been documented from ingestion of wild game, some experts, including the Center for Disease Control, have recommended the use of non-toxic bullets when hunting to avoid lead exposure and that pregnant women and children under six should not consume wild-game shot with lead ammunition. (Streater 2009). This recommendation comes after a study conducted in North Dakota found that those who ate wild game had significantly higher levels of lead in their blood than those who did not (Iqbal et. al 2009).</p>		
	<p>ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)</p>	<p>ALTERNATIVE B</p>
<p>Climate Change All climate change descriptions are from USFWS (2013). The responses of wildlife to climate change will vary from species to species and new groupings of plants and animals will form. Some plant and animal species will be able to adjust to new habitats and they will occupy different parts of the landscape; however, rare and endangered species are likely to become less abundant or go extinct. Still other species may have fewer young surviving from year to year resulting in lower population growth. Harmful algal blooms are likely to become more abundant creating additional problems for other species. Species with fast generation times that are able to mature and reproduce quickly will be better able to adapt to the rapid environmental change as a result of climate impacts. As climate change progresses, habitats will change and species will need to be able to move from their current location, or range, to new ones.</p>	<p>The proposed action is not anticipated to significantly contribute to the cumulative impacts of climate change. The impacts of fossil fuel-powered hunter vehicles accessing the facility would be tiny compared to the emissions coming from a multitude of vehicles transiting the Columbia Gorge via Interstate 84 and State Highway 14.</p>	<p>Under this alternative, no hunting would occur on the hatchery; therefore, changes to climate changes projections would remain the same.</p>

<p>Many things can create barriers to a species trying to move to a new range including that some species may not be able to physically move fast enough to keep up with rapid shifts in suitable climates and habitats. Other species that do move fast enough may not find food, shelter or other resources in their new range. The ability of species to move to new places can also be affected by interactions with other species, such as competitors or parasites, that may promote or prevent range shifts.</p>		
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Monitoring

Spring Creek NFH staff monitors the grounds including trails, access points and undeveloped property of the hatchery for changes in conditions, safety concerns, property damage, ecological impact, littering, pollution or other detrimental changes. This is a standard work function throughout the normal tour of duty of management and operations staff. Any issue that impacts resources to a notable degree will trigger a discussion and a management response, if needed.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife authorities or other state and local authorities with jurisdiction may monitor wildlife resources according to state regulations and in coordination with hatchery staff. If concerns or impacts are noticed by state authorities, the hatchery will work cooperatively with them to resolve any issues.

Enumeration of hunter use and harvest by WDFW would be helpful in case further assessments are required or if the Service wanted to document and track trends in these metrics over time.

Summary of Analysis

Opening hunting on the Big White Ponds Area on the hatchery and nearby NFH facilities will only have insignificant impacts on the natural and cultural resources and socioeconomic factors in the area of Spring Creek NFH.

List of Sources, Agencies and Persons Consulted:

Information was provided by the Hatchery Manager of Spring Creek NFH, the Spring Creek NFH Hunting Plan, and from various environmental websites focused on the State of Washington, Klickitat County, and the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.

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- Frey, W.H. 2018. Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates. Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. Washington, DC.
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USFWS (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). 2019. Historical Hunting License Data for 2019. Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration website. April 1, 2019.

WDE (Washington Department of Ecology). 2011. Focus on Water Availability: Wind-White Salmon Watershed, WRIA 29. Lacey, WA.

WAFWA (Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) Mule Deer Working Group 2018. 2018 Range-wide status of Black-Tailed and Mule Deer.

WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2018a. 2018 Game status and trend report. Wildlife Program, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, Washington, USA

WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2018b. 2018 Game Harvest Reports. <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest>

WDFW (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife). 2019. State of Washington 2019 Wild Turkey Spring Season regulations. <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02057/wdfw02057.pdf>

List of Preparers:

Laila Lienesch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Columbia Pacific Northwest and Pacific Islands Regional Office, National Wildlife Refuge System, Portland, Oregon.

Tom Sinclair, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Regional Office, Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program, Portland, Oregon

State Coordination:

The WDFW was notified via email of the hatchery's intent to open the Big White Ponds Area to hunting. A draft copy of the Spring Creek NFH Hunting Plan was provided as a courtesy to WDFW prior to its release for public comment.

Points of Contact

Sandra Jonker, WDFW

Stefanie Bergh, WDFW District Biologist (Region 5, District 9)

Captain Jeff Wickersham, WDFW Law Enforcement (Region 5)

WDFW Harvest and Regulation coordination: Matt Gardiner 360-906-6746

WDFW Enforcement: 360-696-6211

Tribal Consultation:

The Yakima Nation was notified via email of the hatchery's intent to open the West Cook-Underwood Road area to hunting. A draft copy of the Spring Creek NFH Hunting Plan was provided as a courtesy to the Yakima Nation prior to its release for public comment.

Points of Contact:

Laural James, Yakima Nation
David Blodgett, Yakima Nation
Bill Sharp, Yakima Nation

Public Outreach:

This Draft EA will be posted on the hatchery website and public comment will be solicited. Comments or requests for additional information may be submitted through any of the following methods:

Email: david_carie@fws.gov

Please include "Spring Creek Hunt" in the subject line of the message.

Fax: Attn: Spring Creek Hunt

FAX #509-493-1730

U.S. Mail: Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery
61552 State HWY 14
Underwood, Washington 98651

All comments received from individuals become part of the official public record. We will handle all requests for such comments in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the CEQ's NEPA regulations in 40 CFR 1506.6(f). The Service's practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments.

Determination:

This section will be filled out upon completion of any public comment period and at the time of finalization of the Environmental Assessment.

- The Service's action will not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. See the attached "**Finding of No Significant Impact**".
- The Service's action **may significantly affect** the quality of the human environment and the Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Preparer Signature: **THOMAS SINCLAIR** Digitally signed by THOMAS
SINCLAIR
Date: 2020.06.25 14:50:05 -07'00'

Name/Title/Organization: Thomas B. Sinclair, Jr./Westside Line Supervisor/U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service/ Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program

Reviewer Signature: **JUDITH GORDON** Digitally signed by JUDITH GORDON
Date: 2020.07.01 10:52:51 -07'00'

Name/Title: Judy Gordon/Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation
Program

**APPENDIX A
OTHER APPLICABLE STATUTES, EXECUTIVE ORDERS & REGULATIONS**

STATUTES, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, AND REGULATIONS	
<p>Cultural Resources</p> <p>American Indian Religious Freedom Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 1996 – 1996a; 43 CFR Part 7</p> <p>Antiquities Act of 1906, 16 U.S.C. 431-433; 43 CFR Part 3</p> <p>Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. 470aa – 470mm; 18 CFR Part 1312; 32 CFR Part 229; 36 CFR Part 296; 43 CFR Part 7</p> <p>National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470-470x-6; 36 CFR Parts 60, 63, 78, 79, 800, 801, and 810</p> <p>Paleontological Resources Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 470aaa – 470aaa-11</p> <p>Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3001-3013; 43 CFR Part 10</p> <p>Executive Order 11593 – Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, 36 Fed. Reg. 8921 (1971)</p> <p>Executive Order 13007 – Indian Sacred Sites, 61 Fed. Reg. 26771 (1996)</p>	<p>Operations at the Spring Creek NFH strive to meet all of these statutes, executive orders, and regulations.</p>
<p>Fish & Wildlife</p> <p>Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 668-668c, 50 CFR 22</p> <p>Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544; 36 CFR Part 13; 50 CFR Parts 10, 17, 23, 81, 217, 222, 225, 402, and 450</p> <p>Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, 16 U.S.C. 742 a-m</p>	

<p>Lacey Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 3371 et seq.; 15 CFR Parts 10, 11, 12, 14, 300, and 904</p> <p>Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 703-712; 50 CFR Parts 10, 12, 20, and 21</p> <p>Executive Order 13186 – Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds, 66 Fed. Reg. 3853 (2001)</p>	
<p>Natural Resources</p> <p>Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7401-7671q; 40 CFR Parts 23, 50, 51, 52, 58, 60, 61, 82, and 93; 48 CFR Part 23</p> <p>Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.</p> <p>Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. 1271 et seq.</p> <p>Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species, 64 Fed. Reg. 6183 (1999)</p>	
<p>Water Resources</p> <p>Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.; 15 CFR Parts 923, 930, 933</p> <p>Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (commonly referred to as Clean Water Act), 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.; 33 CFR Parts 320-330; 40 CFR Parts 110, 112, 116, 117, 230-232, 323, and 328</p> <p>Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, as amended, 33 U.S.C. 401 et seq.; 33 CFR Parts 114, 115, 116, 321, 322, and 333</p> <p>Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, 42 U.S.C. 300f et seq.; 40 CFR Parts 141-148</p> <p>Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management, 42 Fed. Reg. 26951 (1977)</p>	

Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands, 42 Fed. Reg. 26961 (1977)	
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APPENDIX B

SPRING CREEK NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY HUNTING PLAN