

Environmental Assessment for Codifying Recreational Fishing at Willard National Fish Hatchery

June 2019

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 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 codify recreational fishing opportunities for brook trout and rainbow trout on the Willard National Fish Hatchery (NFH) in accordance with the Willard NFH Fishing Plan. This action will codify bank fishing along approximately 600 feet of the north bank of the Little White Salmon River located on the hatchery.

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:

National Fish Hatcheries are 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 an individual hatchery, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) policy, laws and international treaties.

The Willard NFH consists of 80.10 acres of Service-owned land and an additional 3.70 acres acquired by agreement, easement, or lease. The hatchery is located in Skamania County, Washington and is contained within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area and the State of Washington's Wind-White Salmon Water Resources Inventory Area (Figure 1). In addition, three government residences are located adjacent to the hatchery on Coho Loop.



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

Willard NFH is located on the Little White Salmon River approximately five miles upstream of its confluence with the Columbia River (Figure 2). The Little White Salmon River joins the Columbia River at RM 162.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Willard National Fish Hatchery
 Skamania County Washington

Land Status

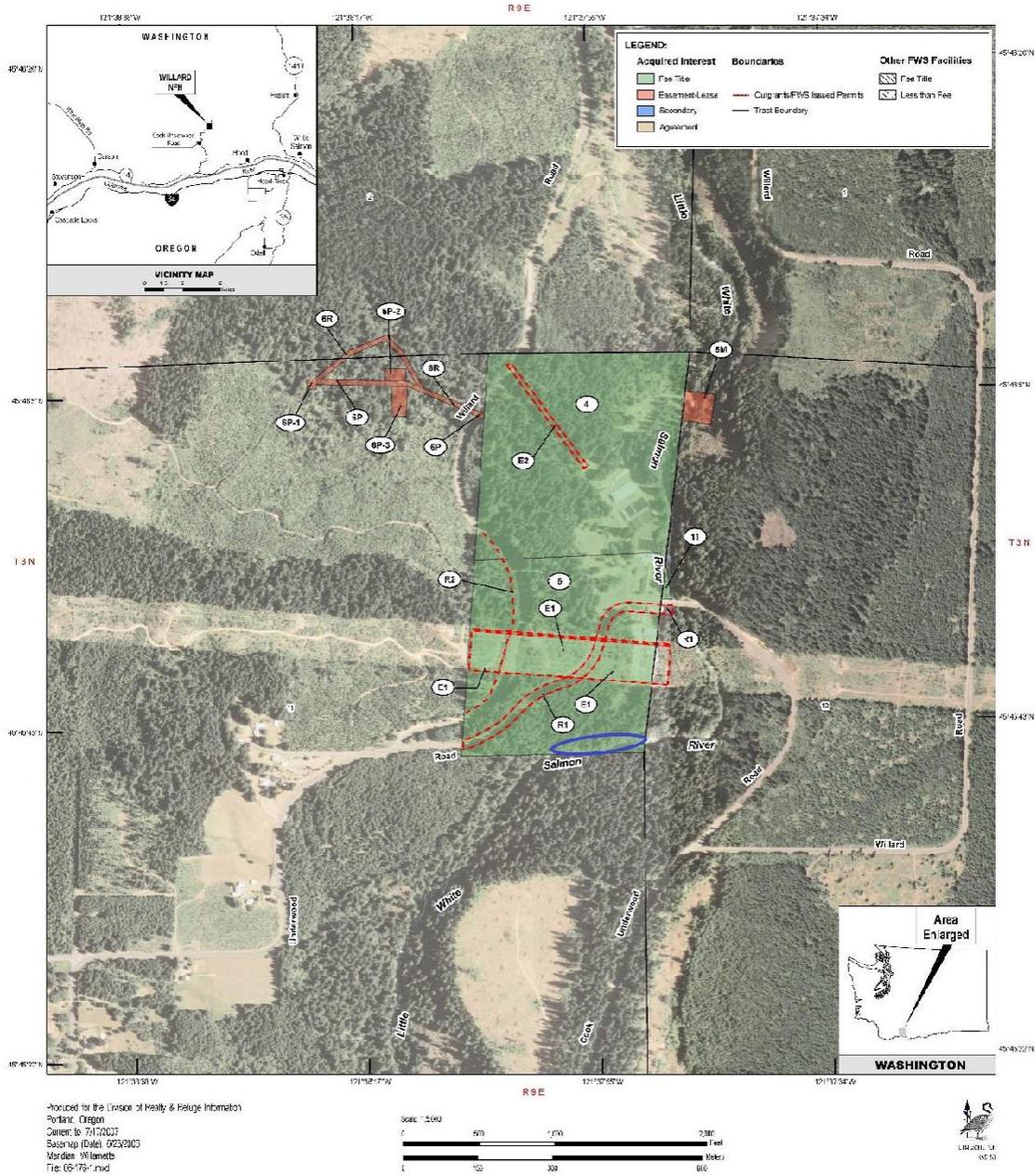


Figure 2. Aerial view of Willard NFH with fishing area denoted.

The facility was established in 1952 under the authorization of the Mitchell Act (16 USC 755-757; 52 Stat. 345) as mitigation for Bonneville Dam impacts on Pacific salmon. The hatchery is located above an impassable natural waterfall on the Little White Salmon River, so adult Pacific salmon are collected and spawned at Little White Salmon NFH and their eggs are shipped to Willard NFH to initiate fish production. Co-located with the former Western Fish Nutrition Laboratory, this fish culture station was responsible for making significant early advances in fish nutrition. The laboratory building is now occupied by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Columbia River Research Laboratory, a substation of the Western Fisheries Research Center, Seattle, Washington.

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).

The Willard NFH has provided fishing opportunities to the public since its establishment in 1952 and long before current environmental policies and regulations were promulgated. This document serves to retroactively and officially open Willard NFH lands to public fishing via the Code of Federal Regulations. This action will ensure that all legal and policy obligations are met. Additionally, it is a priority of the Service to provide for wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities, including fishing, when those opportunities are compatible with the purposes for which the hatchery was established and the mission of the National Fish Hatchery System.

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

The primary purpose of this proposed action is to codify compatible wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities on the Willard NFH. The need of the proposed action is to meet the requirements of Secretarial Order 3347 involving “identifying specific actions to expand access significantly for recreational hunting and fishing on public lands as may be appropriate”.

The objective of fishing program at the Willard NFH is to provide:

- The public with a recreational opportunity to experience fishing on public hatchery land and increase opportunities for anglers, especially for youth and families.

Alternatives Considered

Alternative A (Preferred Alternative): Fishing access would continue on the Willard NFH as it has for the last 68 years.

Alternative B: Fishing access would be terminated after 68 years at the Willard NFH.

Affected Environment

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.

Willard NFH lands consist primarily 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. In general, the understory is relatively open with shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. The tree canopy of these oak woodlands obscures 30-70 percent of the sky. Oak habitats are typically maintained through periodic, low-intensity fire, which removes small conifers and maintains a moderate cover of low shrubs.

Tables 1-5 provide additional, brief descriptions of each resource present in the vicinity of the Willard 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 ACTION AND NO ACTION ALTERNATIVES

<p>Rainbow Trout and Brook Trout</p>
<p>Brook trout and rainbow trout are popular game fish species that are widely pursued throughout the country. Their populations are generally resilient with respect to typical fishing pressure.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on fish populations should be relatively insignificant. Fishing activities have taken place at this facility for over 68 years and fish population levels have varied widely during this period based on climate change, dam construction, water withdrawals, dredging, and a host of other extensive habitat modifications. Actual data though are lacking because the Service does not regulate fisheries in state waters and therefore has no standing to conduct creel surveys or other angler surveys. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) does have the standing to enumerate angler use and catch, but does not deem the Willard NFH fishery of enough significance to which to dedicate scarce resources, therefore no data are available for this analysis.</p> <p>Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially increase the numbers of fish in the Little White Salmon river, but these increases would likely be insignificant.</p>
<p>Other Wildlife and Aquatic Species</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on wildlife and other aquatic species should be relatively insignificant. Fishing activities have taken place at this facility for over 68 years and populations of wildlife and aquatic species have varied widely during this period primarily due to major habitat alterations within the Columbia River Basin.</p> <p>Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially increase the numbers of wildlife and aquatic species, but these increases would likely be insignificant. Though the actual level of angler use is not known, direct observation suggests that increases or decreases in public access would result in trivial changes to this resource.</p>
<p>Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Special Status Species</p>
<p>The Service’s Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) 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 possibly being present in the proposed action area.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>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 anglers. 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 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 fishing. Due to the fact that the Willard NFH is located upstream of an impassible waterfall, bull trout and its critical habitat do not occur.</p>

Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially increase the numbers of threatened and endangered species and other special status species, but these increases would likely be insignificant. Though the actual level of angler use is not known, direct observation suggests that increases or decreases in public access would result in trivial changes to this resource.

Vegetation (including vegetation of special management concern)

Vegetation 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. Among the common forest understory plants are common snowberry, Oregon grape, rose, trailing blackberry, and western hazel.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on vegetation should be relatively insignificant. Fishing activities have taken place at this facility for over 68 years and the areas open to fishing have been disturbed for at least that long. Most areas open to fishing have been maintained in a park-like setting from the facility's beginning, so while they reflect natural vegetation types, some vegetative elements may have been eliminated to facilitate maintenance. 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, use of vegetation to assist with fishing, creation of social trails, etc.).

Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially increase the amount and coverage of natural vegetation since public impacts (i.e., trampling of vegetation, use of vegetation to assist with fishing, creation of social trails, etc.) would be reduced, but these increases would likely be insignificant. Furthermore, these areas would most likely continue to be maintained in a park-like setting, so complete reversion to some historical state is not expected. Though the actual level of angler use is not known, direct observation suggests that increases or decreases in public access would result in trivial changes to this resource.

Geology and Soils

Descriptions of the geology and soils are from Haagen (1990).

The soils of the hatchery are predominantly in the Rock outcrop-Xerorthents complex, 50 to 90 percent slopes. This map unit is on back slopes and escarpments of mountains and is composed of about 65 percent Rock outcrop and 25 percent Xerorthents. Included in this unit are small areas of McElroy, Skoly, and St. Martin soils on landslides. The Xerorthents are shallow to deep and are well drained. They formed in colluvium derived dominantly from basalt, andesite, and some volcanic ash. No single profile is typical of Xerorthents, but one commonly observed in the survey area has a surface layer of very dark grayish brown gravelly loam 6 inches thick. The upper 13 inches of the underlying material is dark brown very gravelly loam, and the lower part to a depth of 31 inches is brown extremely gravelly clay loam over bedrock. Depth to bedrock ranges from 10 to 60 inches. Rock outcrop consists of exposed areas of dominantly basalt and andesite.

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: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially decrease impacts on geology and soils; however, the robust nature of these resources suggests that eliminating this level of public access would have minimal, if not negligible impacts

Air Quality

The county around the Willard NFH ranked in the 90th percentile for emissions of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides, in the 50th percentile for volatile organic compound emissions, in the 10th percentile for sulphur dioxide

emissions and air quality index (Scorecard 2011). The scale runs from 0-100, with the lower percentiles representing the cleanest or best counties in the U.S. and the higher percentiles representing the dirtiest or worst.

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 angler 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: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially decrease impacts on air quality; however, the extremely large amount of vehicle emissions associated with State Highway 14 and Interstate 84 would far overshadow any emissions associated with angler access reduction.

Water Resources

Although the area is relatively sparsely populated, Water Resources Inventory Area 29 is among the most densely farmed basins in southwestern Washington. 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 anglers would likely be undetectable in relation to the large amount of domestic, agricultural and industrial use in the area.

Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially decrease impacts on water resources; however, water use by a relatively small number of anglers would likely be undetectable in relation to the large amount of domestic, agricultural and industrial use in the area.

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 in the Columbia and Little White Salmon Rivers. Visitor access is limited to parking along the Cook-Underwood Road and walking into the Little White Salmon River.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts of codifying an activity that has been taking place for over 68 years is insignificant. The public is completely unaware of such procedural requirements and couldn’t care less as long as their access to a fishing experience is not interrupted.</p> <p>Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH would likely increase impacts on a small but vocal community of recreational anglers. There would likely be some local outcry, but overall the impact would be minimal.</p>
Cultural Resources
<p>Prior to the establishment of the hatchery the 40-acre parcel that now contains the main hatchery buildings had been homesteaded by Franklin and Mary Brower in 1898 (GLO land records). The Brower's formed the Oregon Lumber Company and sold the property to Chee Lumber Company in 1913 (Skamania County 1947). Between 1913 and 1934 the property was sold several times through Sheriff sale to various lumber</p>

companies, including Slaughter and Jones, Clark and Wilson Lumber Company, and Clark and Wilson Investment Company. In 1934 Martin and Elizabeth Nielsen purchased the land from the Clark and Wilson Investment Company. In 1947 Frank Webb began paying on contract for the property. In 1951 the United States of America purchased the tract for the Willard hatchery (Skamania County 1947).

The northern portion of the hatchery area that contains the hatchery building and most of the water rights was owned in the 1910s by the timber company, Clark and Wilson. Herman Grunke purchased the parcel from Clark and Wilson between 1931 and 1936 (Skamania County 1947). Grunke then sold the property in 1936 to Ola M. Bell. Bell apparently sold the property because it was owned by S. H. Calvert when it was purchased by the government in 1951 for inclusion in the Willard NFH.

The hatchery was constructed between 1951 and 1953, a total of twelve residences were not completed until 1953. As such, the hatchery complex is more than 50 years old and thus the project is subject to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended). In 2003 the Residential units at Willard NFH were determined to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places and removing three of the houses would be an adverse effect (36 CFR 800.5) (Speulda 2003). In order to mitigate the project's adverse effects a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was developed and signed by the USFWS and Washington's State Historic Preservation Officer. Another six residences were removed during 2020.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

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 accidentally and trivial. Savvy persons would have access to a number of cultural resources, so there is potential for disturbance and pilfering.

Alternative B: Under Alternative B no fishing would occur on the hatchery; therefore effect on cultural resources would be unchanged.

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

Land Use
The majority of the lands within the Willard NFH are undeveloped natural areas. Parking is available along the shoulder of the Cook-Underwood Road.
Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts
Alternative A (Proposed Action): Overall the direct and indirect impacts on hatchery land use are insignificant. Access is provided via existing roads and very little dedicated infrastructure and maintenance is required.
Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on Willard NFH could potentially decrease impacts on hatchery land use, but these impacts are insignificant. Maintenance of road rights-of-way, trails, and trash collection would likely be reduced, but the facility dedicates very little time at present to these activities.
Hatchery Administration
The Willard NFH has an authorized staffing level of three full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The FY 2017 budget to support the facility operations was \$613K.

Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts

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 fishing and access regulations.

Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially decrease impacts on hatchery administration, but these would be insignificant since impacts are themselves insignificant.

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

Local and Regional Economies
<p>Descriptions of the local and regional economies are from Skamania County (2019).</p> <p>Top employment includes jobs in the tourism industry, local government, four school districts, a lumber mill and small manufacturing. Outdoor recreation is major form of activity including wind surfing, kiteboarding, mountain biking, kayaking, sailing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hunting and fishing. Skamania County’s agricultural production is a fairly small part of the county economy.</p> <p>With regard to recreational fishing, the Southwest Region of Washington had an estimated 2011 impact of \$114M in retail sales, \$188M in economic output, \$60.4M in labor income, \$11.6M in state & local taxes, \$14.5M in Federal taxes, and supported 1,565 jobs (NSIA 2015).</p>
<p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Fishing access at the Willard NFH probably has little impact on the non-recreational fishing sectors of the local and regional economy. Fishing in the Columbia and Little White Salmon Rivers outside of the hatchery lands does however represent a substantial portion of the local and regional economy. Recreational fishing-related economic outputs associated with hatchery access are likely higher than non-recreational fishing-related outputs, but pale in comparison to those associated with off hatchery waters.</p> <p>Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH could potentially negatively impact recreational fishing-related expenditures in the local and regional economies, but these impacts would pale in comparison to other expenditures associated with the adjacent Columbia and Little White Salmon Rivers. Impacts to non-recreational fishing sectors of the local and regional economies would likely be insignificant or non-existent.</p>
Agricultural Practices and Safety Issues
<p>Descriptions of the local and regional economies are from USDA (2012).</p> <p>Skamania County’s agricultural production is a fairly small part of the county economy. In 2012, there were 144 farms in the county, covering 6,473 acres. While those numbers are up from the last Census, the county still had fewer acres in farmland than any county in the state. The main crop in Skamania is actually trees. In 1982, the timber harvest in Skamania was 410 million board feet, with about 60 percent from federal land and 40 percent from timber industry land. Logging from both sources had all but dried up two decades later.</p>
<p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): Fishing access at the Willard NFH probably has little impact on agricultural practices and safety issues. The number of potential anglers is so small it would be hard to imagine them having any impact.</p>

<p>Alternative B: Eliminating fishing access on the Willard NFH is not likely to have negative impacts in agricultural practices and safety issues given that small number of anglers currently involved in fishing on the hatchery.</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 potential 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>
<p>Certain Sector of the Economy (e.g., Agricultural Practices)</p> <p>The proposed action does not affect a certain sector of the economy.</p> <p>Anticipated Direct And Indirect Impacts</p> <p>Alternative A (Proposed Action): N/A</p> <p>Alternative B: N/A</p>

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 ANY ALTERNATIVES

Other Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Activity Impacting Affected Environment	Descriptions of Anticipated Cumulative Impacts	
	ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B
<p>Fishing Fishing activities associated with this codification have likely been taking place since establishment of the hatchery in 1952.</p>	<p>Though actual data regarding angler use and catch are not available for the hatchery, it is reasonable to assume that fishing taking place on the facility is a tiny fraction of what takes place in the Columbia River and its other tributaries. Therefore, this alternative is thought not to significantly add to cumulative impacts.</p>	<p>Given the relatively low level of angler use and catch compared to the Columbia River and its other tributaries, elimination of fishing access at the facility would not significantly affect cumulative impacts.</p>
<p>Other wildlife-dependent recreation (i.e., road and trail development and use) The Willard 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 fishing probably has increased 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>Eliminating fishing access to the hatchery would likely decrease the associated opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation, but this decrease 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>Development and Population Increase Willard NFH is located in Skamania County, Washington. The County's population in 2017 was estimated at 11,837 with a growth rate of 2.10% in the past year according to the most recent United States census data (Frey 2018). Skamania County, Washington is the 34th largest county in Washington.</p>	<p>The 2017 population growth rate in the county adjacent to Willard NFH is higher than the 2018 national average of 0.62% (Frey 2018), so it can be speculated that the number of people fishing 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 8% of the Pacific Northwest's population participates in fishing activities (USFWS 2018), the actual increase in anglers will be insignificant.</p>	<p>Since the expected population increase in the county adjacent to the hatchery is so small, elimination of fishing access will have very little if any cumulative impacts.</p>

	ALTERNATIVE A (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	ALTERNATIVE B
<p>Agricultural land uses</p> <p>Agricultural production is a fairly small part of the local economy. According to USDA (2012), there were 144 farms in the county, covering 6,473 acres. While those numbers are up from the last Census, the county still had fewer acres in farmland than any county in the state (USDA (2012)). The main crop in Skamania is actually trees. In 1982, the timber harvest in Skamania was 410 million board feet, with about 60 percent from federal land and 40 percent from timber industry land (USDA 2012). Timber harvest was 87 million board feet in 2015, with most of the cut on large private (non-industry) holdings (Skamania County 2019). Logging employment in the county declined from 90 jobs in 1990 to 10 jobs in 2016 (Skamania County 2019).</p>	<p>The current use of the area surrounding the hatchery is expected to continue and fishing access should in no way contribute to any changes in agricultural land uses.</p>	<p>Elimination of fishing access at the hatchery should in no way contribute to any changes to surrounding agricultural land uses.</p>
<p>Use of lead tackle</p> <p>There is a concern about the bioavailability of spent lead ammunition (bullets) and sinkers on the environment, endangered and threatened species, birds (especially raptors), mammals, and humans or other fish and wildlife susceptible to bio magnification. A concern related to fishing is the use of lead sinkers and jigs for fishing. “Sinkers” are weights of various sizes and shapes used to sink a fishing line below the surface of the water; “jigs” are weighted hooks, often brightly painted or otherwise decorated, used as lures in angling. Because sinkers and jigs are generally much larger than shot pellets, a single lead sinker may induce acute lead poisoning. In North America, lead poisoning from sinker ingestion has been documented in common loons; trumpeter, tundra, and mute swans; and sandhill cranes. Many other species of waterbirds have feeding habits similar to those in which sinker ingestion has been documented (e.g., diving ducks, grebes, herons, osprey, bald eagles). These species could also be at risk for lead poisoning from sinker ingestion (Scheuhammer 1996). Beginning on</p>	<p>Continuing fishing access at the hatchery could possibly increase the amount of lead tackle use, but this use would be a tiny addition to the overall lead tackle use being experienced by the Little White Salmon River.</p>	<p>Elimination of fishing access at the hatchery will likely have very little to no effect on the cumulative impacts of lead tackle.</p>

<p>December 4, 2010, the WDFW prohibited the use of lead fishing weights and jigs that measure 1.5 inches or less on twelve recreational fishing lakes. It also adopted a ban on fishing flies containing lead at Long Lake in Ferry County. Lead weights and jigs are not prohibited in the Little White Salmon River</p>		
<p>Climate Change Impacts of climate change have been manifested through northward range shifts, population declines, and migration and spawn timing shifts more many fish species, particularly salmonids (Crozier 2016). It is anticipated that conditions will only worsen for cold water-adapted species.</p>	<p>The proposed action is not anticipated to significantly contribute to the cumulative impacts of climate change. The impacts of fossil fuel-powered angler vehicles accessing the facility are tiny compared to the emissions coming from a multitude of vehicles transiting the Columbia Gorge via Interstate 84 and State Highway 14.</p>	<p>Elimination of fishing access at the hatchery could potentially decrease the cumulative impacts of climate change by decreasing the number of fossil fuel-powered angler vehicles, but this decrease would likely be negligible given the tiny fraction of Columbia Gorge transiting vehicles this represents.</p>

Mitigation Measures and Conditions

The Willard NFH staff and WDFW authorities will monitor the impacts of the action according to their responsibilities and jurisdiction. Any noticeable impact on safety, the environment (habitat or human environment), facility operations or other factors would be addressed through management actions to minimize the impacts. As there are no known substantial impacts at this time, monitoring is the main mitigation measure proposed.

Monitoring

Willard 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 management and operations staff’s normal tour of duty. 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 resources (e.g., state waters and state fishery and wildlife) 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 angler use and catch 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

Codifying existing fishing on the facility will only have insignificant impacts on the natural and cultural resources and socioeconomic factors in the area of the Willard NFH.

List of Sources, Agencies and Persons Consulted:

Information was provided by the Hatchery Manager of the Willard NFH, the Willard NFH Fishing Plan, and from various environmental and socioeconomic websites focused on the State of Washington, Skamania County, and the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.

References:

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List of Preparers:

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 a letter of the hatchery's intent to codify public access and fishing on its lands. A copy of the Willard NFH Fishing Plan was provided as a courtesy to WDFW prior to its release for public comment.

Points of Contact

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

WDFW Enforcement: Captain Jeff Wickersham WDFW Region 5 Office 360-696-6211

Tribal Consultation:

The Yakima Nation was notified of the hatchery's intent to codify public access and fishing on its lands.

Point of Contact

Yakama Nation Fisheries Asst. Harvest Coordinator: Megan Begay 509-945-4394

Public Outreach:

Since this action merely codifies public access and fish that is already known and enjoyed by the general public, no further coordination was deemed necessary

Determination:

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

- X 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: 2020.06.26 08:19:25 -07'00'

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

Reviewer Signature: **JUDITH GORDON** Digitally signed by JUDITH GORDON
Date: 2020.07.01 10:54:59 -07'00'

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

APPENDIX 1
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 Willard NFH strive to meet all of these statues, 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

WILLARD NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY FISHING PLAN