

From: [BrownScott, Jennifer](#)
To: [Kelly Toy](#)
Cc: [Dexter, Nathan L](#); [Sylvia Pelizza](#)
Subject: Refuge planning process
Date: Friday, June 12, 2015 2:23:03 PM
Importance: High

Kelly,

As requested, here is an explanation of the process used to open new uses and evaluate existing uses as required by the the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act ((Public Law 105-57).

Background

As directed by the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd et seq.), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act ((Public Law 105-57) (Administration Act) requires that lands and waters within the National Wildlife Refuge System are closed to all public access and use unless they are specifically and legally opened. The Administration Act also directs that no refuge use may be allowed or continued unless it is determined to be appropriate and compatible. It further defines a compatible use as a use that will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the mission of the Refuge System or the purpose of the Refuge. An appropriate use is one that contributes to fulfilling the refuge purpose or the Refuge System mission. In accordance with 16 U.S.C. 715s, we may only authorize public or private economic use of the natural resources of any National Wildlife Refuge, where it is determine d that the use contributes to the achievement of the national wildlife refuge purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge System mission.

The Administration Act also requires an opportunity for public comment during the re-evaluation of existing uses and evaluation of new uses.

Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge was established by Executive Order 2123 on January 20, 1915 with the purpose of "...a refuge, preserve and breeding ground for native birds."

A Comprehensive Conservation Plan was completed for Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge in 2013. Aquaculture was not evaluated during this process.

The Path Forward

In order to evaluate a request to conduct aquaculture on Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge, we first must establish with certainty that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has jurisdiction over the use. We will first request that the US Fish and Wildlife Service Office of the Solicitor read the Use Easement Deed (Deed No. 18251) and confirm the Service's jurisdiction over the proposed use within the Washington State owned tidelands.

If the US Fish and Wildlife Service does have jurisdiction over the proposed use, we

would need to follow requirements set forth in various laws and policies including the Administration Act, the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251-1376; Chapter 758; P.L. 845, June 30, 1948; 62 Stat. 1155), and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) (NEPA). In order to meet NEPA Clean Water Act and Administration Act requirements we must complete the following:

- Environmental Assessment with an open public process. Due to the potentially controversial nature of the request, the public process would be quite involved;
- Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation;
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance;
- Compatibility Determination;
- Appropriateness Justification

As you can see, this is a complex process with many moving parts and pieces that are fulfilled by several different offices within the US Fish and Wildlife Service. We are currently working on our request to the Solicitor's Office and will let you know whether or not we need to move ahead with the rest of the planning process as soon as we have established jurisdiction.

I hope this explanation is helpful. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Brown-Scott

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