



# FEMA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
NF Ahtanum (A3000) Road Relocation  
Washington State Department of Natural Resources  
Ahtanum State Forest  
Yakima County, Washington  
FEMA-1734-DR-WA

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) applied, through the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Public Assistance funding for an Alternate Project to relocate a segment of road that is designated by DNR as stream adjacent parallel (SAP) on the North Fork (NF) Ahtanum (A3000) Road. Road relocation consists of abandoning the SAP segment of road and re-routing traffic to another existing road, A3600. The purpose of the Public Assistance program is to award financial grants to assist state and local governments, federally recognized Tribal governments, and certain private nonprofit entities with the response and recovery from disasters.

The project is located in the Ahtanum State Forest, which is approximately 30 miles west of Yakima, in Yakima County. The Ahtanum State Forest encompasses an area of approximately 76,000 acres and draws thousands of visitors each year. The NF Ahtanum (A3000) Road is a major road in the Ahtanum State Forest and provides access for grazing and commercial forest harvest operations that have taken place over the last 60-plus years. The area also has heavy year-round dispersed recreation, which includes hunting, fishing, biking, wheeled vehicular use (motorcycles, ATVs, 4x4s), equestrian use, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling.

As part of the DNR's Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP), which is administered under DNR's Forest Practices program, an approximately 3,720 foot-long SAP segment of the NF Ahtanum (A3000) Road has high potential for sediment delivery. One of DNR's goals is to reduce the amount of SAP roads. This segment of road is located in Section 14 of Township 12 North, Range 13 East, W.M., west of Snow Cabins Campground to approximately the west section line of Section 14. The SAP segment of road has native (dirt) surfacing and parallels Shellneck and NF Ahtanum Creeks. The creeks are bull trout habitat, and bull trout is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The SAP road segment is difficult to maintain because of its proximity to the creeks. In addition, sediment from the road enters the creeks, and over time, part of the road has become undermined.

The proposed action, removing the SAP road segment, is the preferred alternative because it reduces on-going sedimentation to Shellneck and NF Ahtanum Creeks and reduces impacts to water quality, fish and fish habitat. While 0.8 acre of vegetation would be removed by the Proposed Action, the abandoned road segments would be rehabilitated and re-vegetated, resulting in a net increase of approximately 2.8 acres of vegetation and forest habitat.

Abandonment of the NF Ahtanum (A3000) Road would be in accordance with DNR's road abandonment procedures, and consist of removing two existing culverts and one bridge, pulling back fill slopes, constructing earth barricades and undrivable waterbars, light ripping of the road surface, placement of wood debris and rocks on the road surface, replanting native vegetation where feasible, and grass seeding. Abandonment of a 150-foot section of A3006 at its junction with A3000 to the crossing with the new construction includes an earth barricade, ripping of the road surface and scattering wood debris on the road surface. A 45-foot long modular bridge would be constructed over Shellneck Creek to connect A3600 Road with A3000 Road. The bridge would span the creek with 9-feet of freeboard and will not require in-water work or construction below the ordinary high water mark. Two existing gates would be used to control public access and direct traffic to A3600 Road.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508), and FEMA's implementing regulations (44 CFR §10.9), FEMA prepared a Draft EA to identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts resulting from the alternatives presented in the EA and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Alternatives evaluated in the EA include: (1) the No Action Alternative, and (2) the Preferred Alternative (or Proposed Action) toward which FEMA would contribute funding. Other alternatives considered, but not carried forward in the analysis, are described in the EA. The Draft EA was made available for public comment for 30 days. FEMA did not receive any comment letters on the Draft EA.

### **CONDITIONS**

The proposed project includes numerous Best Management Practices (BMPs) and mitigation measures that were developed in coordination with representatives of the signatory agencies of the Timber, Fish & Wildlife (TFW) agreement comprised of the DNR Forest Practices Division, Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), and the Yakama Nation to mitigate potential impacts. These mitigation measures are part of the project scope. In addition, the following conditions apply, and failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize the receipt of Federal funds:

1. The applicant shall obtain all required local, state, and federal permits and approvals prior to implementing the Proposed Action and comply with any and all conditions imposed. Failure to obtain all appropriate federal, state and local environmental permits and clearances may jeopardize federal funding
2. Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other laws and Executive Orders.

3. During ground disturbing activities, the applicant will monitor ground disturbance and if any potential archeological resources are discovered, will immediately cease construction in that area and notify the State Historic Preservation Office and FEMA.

### **FINDING**

Based upon the PA grant application and final EA; and in accordance with FEMA's regulations in 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10 for environmental consideration, including Executive Orders (EO) addressing floodplains (EO 11988), wetlands (EO 11990), and environmental justice (EO 12898), FEMA determined the proposed project will not significantly affect the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the project as described in the PA grant application and final EA may proceed.

### **APPROVALS**



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FEMA Region 10

4-18-11

Date