



FEMA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Willapa Hills Trail Project
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Lewis County, Washington
FEMA-1734-DR-WA

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) 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 to replace a damaged 500-foot segment of trail with an approximately 700-foot new earthen berm trail along a new alignment. 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.

During the 2007 winter flood, Rock Creek in Lewis County, Washington, overflowed its banks and eroded an approximately 500-foot section of the Willapa Hills Trail. The project area is located approximately 2.9 miles southwest of the city of Pe Ell, Washington, adjacent to the intersection of Rock Creek Road and State Route (SR) 6 in rural western Lewis County, Washington. The project is located in Township 12 North, Range 5 West, Section 5 (latitude 46.54956, longitude -123.34080). The project area is part of the Willapa Hills Trail, a 56-mile long trail extending from Chehalis to Raymond-along-a-former-railroad-line.

The project includes clearing of vegetation, installation of three 18-inch culverts, construction of an earthen trail prism (approximately 3 to 4 feet high by 12 feet wide), surfacing the trail with gravel, stabilization of the creek bank, and creating juvenile fish habitat. The narrow State Parks' right-of-way (approximately 200 feet wide) between SR 6 and the current location of Rock Creek limits the options for relocating the damaged trail segment. As a result, approximately 5,670 square feet of new trail will encroach on a wetland. In addition to or in conjunction with any requirements associated with a U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Section 404 permit, State Parks also plans to create new wetlands, expand the affected wetland, and restore connectivity to Rock Creek.

To comply with provisions of the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife's Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA), construction work below the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) would occur between July 1 and September 15.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 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 were also considered but not carried forward. After comparing the potential impacts from the alternatives, Alternative B (the Proposed Action) is also the environmentally preferred alternative because significantly less construction would be required compared to the other alternatives. The Draft EA was 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. 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.
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 the ground disturbance, and if any potential archaeological resources are discovered, the applicant will immediately cease construction in the 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



Mark G. Eberlein
Regional Environmental Officer
FEMA Region 10

4-20-12

Date