Environmental Assessment

Lower Chehalis State Forest (Q-Line) Road Segment Reroute

Lower Chehalis State Forest, Grays Harbor, Washington
FEMA-4056-DR-WA (Public Assistance)

Environmental Assessment

Q-Line Road Segment Reroute

Lower Chehalis State Forest (managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources) Grays Harbor County, Washington

FEMA-4056-DR-WA (Public Assistance)

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region X
130 228th Street SW
Bothell, WA 98021
Contact: Science Kilner,
(425) 487-4735; science.kilner@dhs.gov

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
APE	Area of Potential Effects
BMP	best management practice
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
DAHP	Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
DNR	Washington Department of Natural Resources
EA	Environmental Assessment
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMD	Washington Emergency Management Division (Military Department)
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESU	Evolutionarily Significant Unit
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FR	Federal Register
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
LCSF	Lower Chehalis State Forest
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MSA	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PA	Public Assistance
PHS	Priority Habitats and Species
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
TESC	Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WIRA	Water Resource Inventory Area

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), through the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD), has applied for funding under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance Grant (PA) Program to decommission and relocate a damaged section of the Q-Line Road in Grays Harbor County, WA. The damaged section of road is on a steep slope, and is proposed to be relocated approximately 250 feet to the east on a flatter, stable area. Damage occurred to the road during severe winter storms, flooding, landslides, mud slides and debris flows that took place in the region during the period January 14 through the 23, 2012. The storm event was declared a Presidential Disaster on March 12, 2012 (FEMA-4056-DR-WA). FEMA is proposing to fund 75 percent of the cost for this project through its Public Assistance Program (PA).

1.1 Authority and Jurisdiction

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1973 (Stafford Act), as amended, provides federal assistance programs for both public and private losses sustained in disasters. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, FEMA must evaluate the environmental consequences of proposed actions on the natural and human environment before deciding to fund an action, including evaluating alternative means of addressing the purpose and need for a federal action. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has developed a series of regulations for implementing NEPA. These regulations are included in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500–1508.

In compliance with NEPA and its implementing regulations, FEMA prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and other reasonable alternatives that would meet the purpose, need, and objectives of the project as well as a No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative also serves as an environmental baseline against which the other alternatives can be compared.

FEMA used the findings in this EA and public input to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS). The Proposed Action was determined not to significantly affect the quality of the human environment, thus FEMA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) rather than prepare an EIS.

1.2 Resource Topics Not Addressed in the EA

The CEQ and FEMA regulations (44 CFR Section 10) that implement NEPA require NEPA documents to be concise, focus on the issues relevant to the project, and exclude extraneous background data and discussion of subjects that are not relevant or would not be affected by the project alternatives. Accordingly, the following subjects are not evaluated in detail for the following reasons:

Topic	Analysis
Air Quality	Construction would create dust and vehicle and equipment emissions; however, impacts would be minor and temporary. Air quality impact associated with traffic is not expected to increase above current levels. The placement of the road segment on a flat area does not require a cut bank that would otherwise expose soils to wind-borne delivery during dry periods.
Climate Change	CEQ has recently released guidance on how Federal agencies should consider climate change in their action decision-making. The threshold at which NEPA documents should include quantitative analysis for an action is if it will release over 25,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases per year (CEQ 2010). Given the nature and small scale of the Proposed Action, and its lack of greenhouse gas releases, it would not meet this threshold and no detailed analysis was completed.
Noise	The project area does not have sensitive noise receptors. There is existing background noise from commercial logging, vehicular, and recreational activities. Project construction activities (described on page 3-4) would result in noise, which would be temporary, lasting approximately 2 weeks. Noise associated with traffic is not expected to increase above current levels.
Land Use and Socioeconomics (Economic, Public Services and Utilities)	Land use and the identified socioeconomic elements are not expected to be impacted from decommissioning the damaged segment and rerouting the Q-Line Lower Chehalis westward. Abandonment of the damaged segment will not result in or create changes to the land use for the area.
Traffic	Traffic is not expected to increase above current levels as a result of abandoning the damaged segment and rerouting the Lower Chehalis Q-Line westward. Non-gated access to the other portions of the Lower Chehalis Forest will continue to be available to the public with little change in travel time by using the new route.
Visual Quality	With any of the action alternatives, abandonment of the damaged segment and rerouting the Q-Line includes limited combinations of use of existing roads and clearing of vegetation. The visual impacts would be the result of shrub, forb, and grass vegetation removal for 550 ft. feet of newly constructed road. The proposed project would result in a net decrease of approximately 250 feet of roadway, and abandoned road segments will be re-vegetated, resulting in a net increase of 0.2 acre of forest. In addition, there are no designated visual resource areas that would be affected by the project.

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1973 (Stafford Act), as amended, is to provide a range of federal assistance to state and local governments to supplement efforts and resources in alleviating damage or loss from major disasters and/or emergencies. The object of the FEMA PA Program is to provide assistance to state, tribal, and local governments, and certain types of Private Non-Profit (PNP) organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the president. Through the PA Program, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and the repair, replacement, restoration, or relocation of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain PNP organizations.

The need for the FEMA action is to provide funds to DNR to restore the commercial and recreational function of the Q-Line Road that was compromised in the January 2012 storm events. The damaged road section provides mainline access throughout the Lower Chehalis State Forest.

3.0 LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

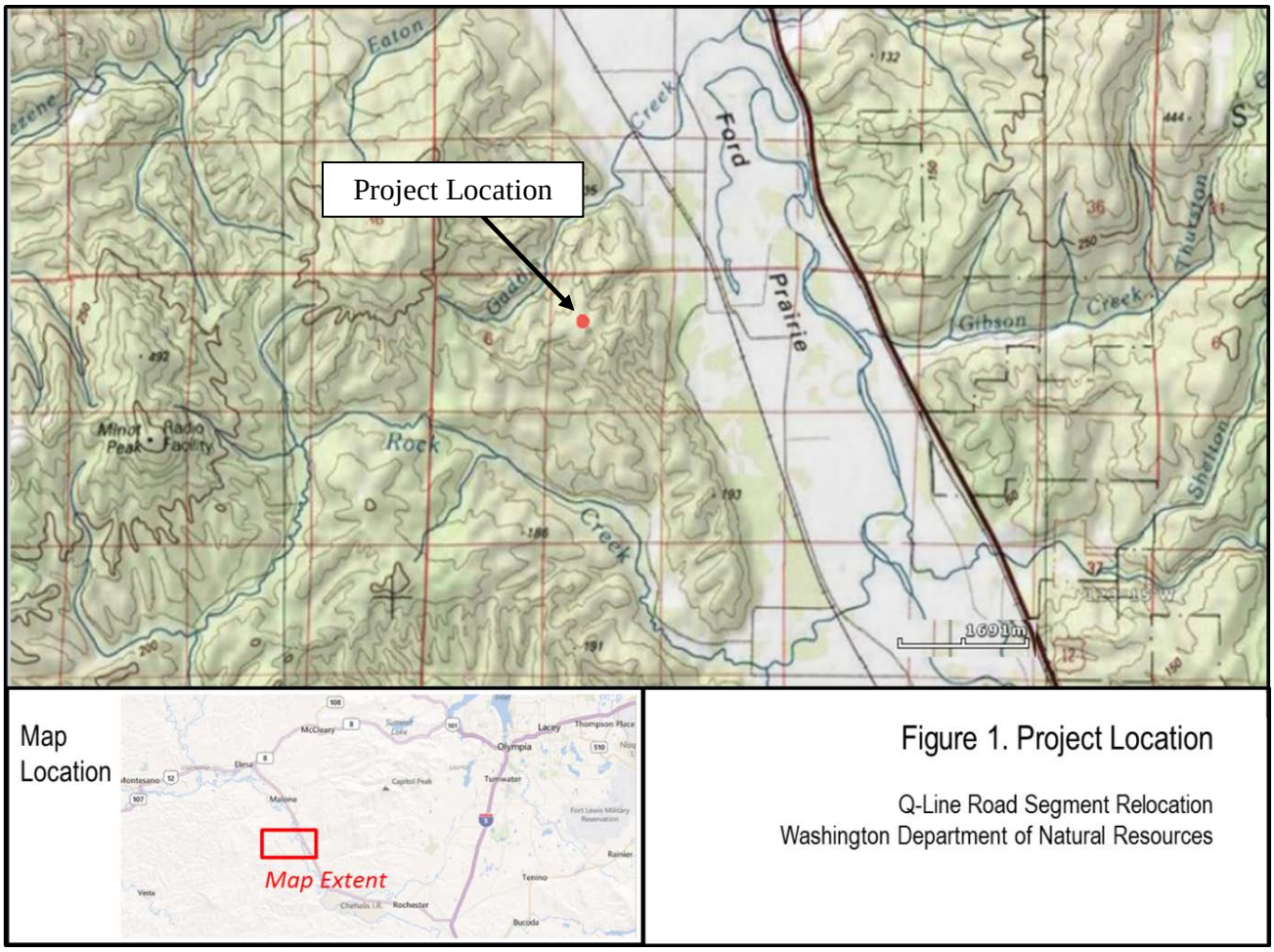
3.1 Location

Grays Harbor County is located on the Southwest corner of the Olympic Peninsula along the Pacific Ocean. The project site is located in the Lower Chehalis State Forest which is approximately 3 miles southwest of Porter, WA, in Section 5 of Township 16 North, Range 5 East, of the Willamette Meridian at Latitude 46.90425o North, Longitude -123.3427 in Grays Harbor County, WA (see Figure 1, Site Location Map).

3.2 Background

Severe storms, flooding, snow loading in January 2012, and subsequent melt and runoff in the Caddis Creek drainage caused the Q-Line Road prism to slough in the Lower Chehalis State Forest. The DNR evaluated the damage and potential repairs and determined that, due to the damaged section of road being located on a steep slope, the best repair alternative would be to decommission a damaged section of the road and relocate the segment approximately 250 feet to the east on a flatter, stable area. Rebuilding the forest road in-place would require stabilizing an area of steep slope (50 percent and greater) and cutting into the side-hill (pers. comm., DNR Engineer B. Freeman, 2012). The DNR has applied through the Washington EMD to the FEMA for funding of a lower cost alternative project, which bypasses the damaged steep-sloped road segment, and decommissions the damaged segment of the Q-Line Road.

Figure 1. Q-Line Site Location Map



4.0 ALTERNATIVES

The CEQ regulations require reasonable alternatives be identified and evaluated. Reasonable alternatives are alternative ways of meeting project objectives. The following project objectives are identified by the DNR:

- Reduce safety hazards arising from: (1) logging truck traffic and (2) public use by temporary lane narrowing and potential for further sloughing or sliding.
- Restore safe through-access for the multiple-use Lower Chehalis State.
- Minimize ground disturbance by avoiding full-bench road reconstruction due to over-steepened slope (80%)
- Avoid long-term maintenance and/or road construction on unstable slopes.

This section discusses the alternatives considered in this EA: (1) the No Action Alternative, (2) the Proposed Action (or Preferred Alternative) toward which FEMA would contribute funding, and (3) Other Alternatives Considered and Not Carried Forward in the analysis.

4.1 Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to DNR to reroute the Q-Line Road to bypass the damaged areas associated with a steep slope. The damaged road section would remain hazardous and prone to future sloughing or sliding and the mainline road would likely be closed, significantly limiting commercial timber operations and public use.

4.2 Alternative 2 - Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, FEMA would provide funding to DNR to construct a section of the Q-Line Road to bypass the damaged segment. The Proposed Action includes the construction of approximately 550 linear feet of new roadway, and abandonment of 500 feet. of the Q-Line Road that was damaged during the disaster, which would be bypassed by the new route (see Figure 2, Proposed Q-Line Proposed Action). The new maintained road alignment will be a total of approximately 50 feet in width, with a 16-foot wide gravel driving surface.

General construction activities and best management practices (BMPs) identified as part of the project are described in detail below.

The project would include the following construction activities:

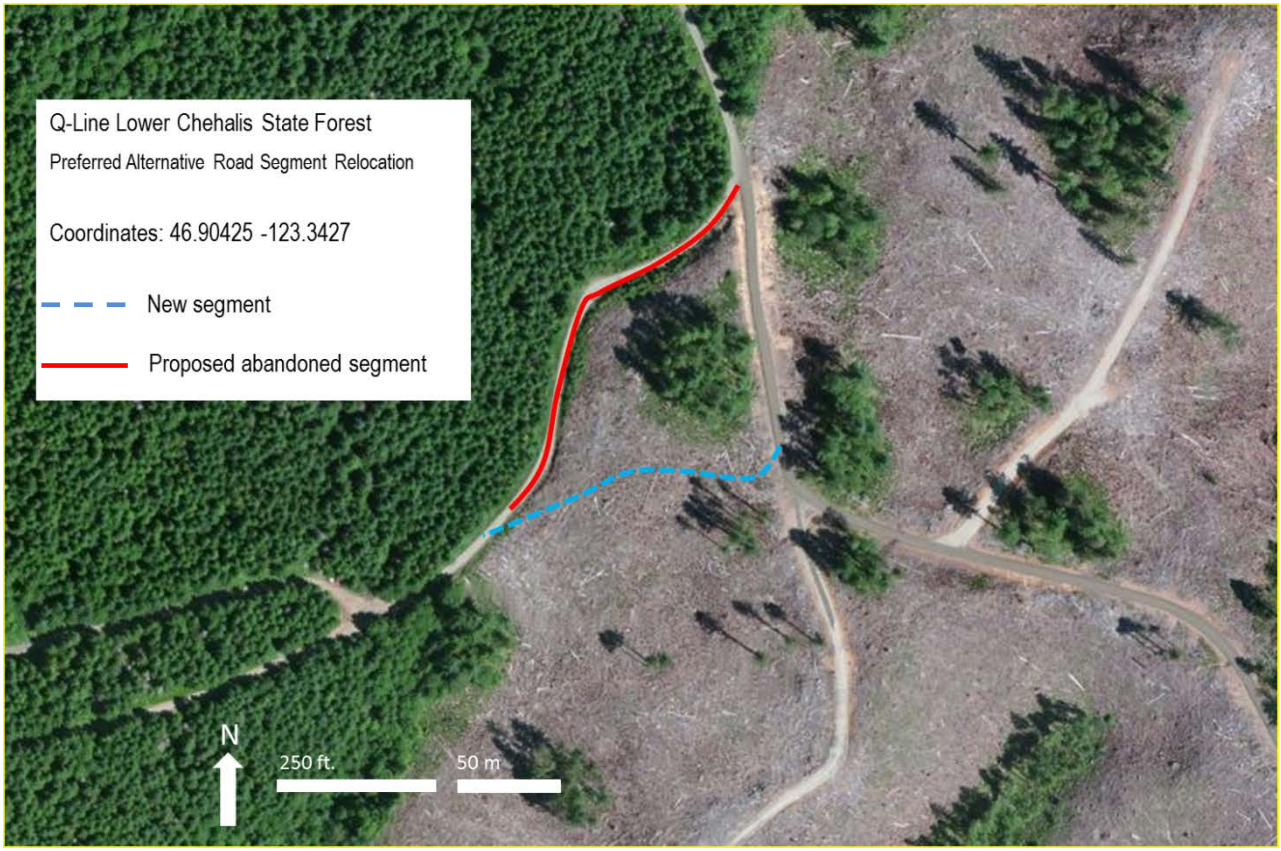
Mobilizing equipment and staging materials: Construction equipment would include: Heavy equipment and hand tools, including pick-up trucks for crew transport. All equipment and materials would be staged (temporarily stored) within already-disturbed areas, such as turnout areas, along the Q-Line Road.

Clearing, brushing, and grubbing: Vegetation clearing would involve the removal of shrubs and herbaceous vegetation up to a 50 feet wide alignment along the new road. The alignment is within a previously-harvested area so no trees and only relic stumps will be removed. Surface soil would be removed down to mineral soils along the 50-foot alignment for the length of the road. Vegetation and soils removed for the project would be scattered onto adjacent uplands.

Road construction: The new road would have a 16 foot subgrade width, and a 1:5 slope of toe for a total of 50 feet wide disturbance area. Road construction would primarily be accomplished using a dozer, grader, and excavator with some work done by hand. The road subgrade consists of 4” minus jaw-run crushed rock. Road surface will be comprised of 2” minus crushed rock, 440 cubic yards of new rock and 200 cubic yards of rock salvaged from the nearby section of abandoned road. New crushed rock would be purchased from a commercial source and transported on the Q-line. Subgrade and road surface will be compacted with dozer, grader,

excavator, vibratory roller and truck traffic throughout the project. The final overall grade of the constructed road segment will vary between 8% and 10 %.

Figure 2 . Q-Line Road Proposed Action



<u>Installing/constructing drainage control structures</u>: The road surface will be crowned to divert runoff to ditches. Culverts will be placed every 300 feet, or as needed, to route water to the downward slope of the road. Flows will be directed southward of the road into an upland forest floor dense with shrubs. The expectation is one culvert approximately 300 feet down grade from top of hill and one at the junction of the existing lower road.

<u>Abandoning the damaged Q-Line segment</u> Approximately 500 feet of the original Q-Line Road would be bypassed by the new route and would be abandoned and rehabilitated. This would involve removing gravel surface to be used on the new road (gravel will be stored in previously disturbed turnouts, road intersections, or placed directly onto the new road surface). Typical strategies for abandonment will be applied:

- Excavator works backward along old road grade loosening the road surface soils, softening the slope of the abandoned road to blend into the surrounding landscape, and planting native vegetation
- A Vegetation Plan and Erosion Control Plan will be completed prior to construction.
- Non-invasive planting will occur in the decommissioned road. The expectation is that local, native vegetation such as salal and swordfern would be used. Trees (Douglas-fir) will also be planted. Woody debris and fill slope soils would be pulled across the abandoned road at the access points.
- Monitoring will be regularly conducted by road engineers and foresters.

Construction of the project is expected to take 1-2 weeks using a contracted road construction crew. The general site area is well drained and wet soil conditions are not anticipated. DNR would adhere to federal, state, and county regulations, permit conditions, and BMPs for the design, construction, and long-term maintenance of the proposed project, including, but not limited to:

- Road and Construction: Road construction shall be consistent with WA State Habitat Conservation Plans (WDNR 1997, WDNR 2005) and Forest Practices Guidelines for Forest Roads (Section 3 Forest Practices Board Manual, Title 222 WAC).

- Vegetation Clearing and Grubbing: Vegetation clearing and ground disturbance for the proposed project would be limited to that essential for the project and in accordance with the construction plan and vegetation plan.

- Water Quality, Erosion, and Sediment Control: There are no waterways or wetlands near the project area. The project has a low likelihood of overland runoff into streams. BMPs for the proposed trail project would involve placement of hay bales or coir logs in newly constructed drainage ditches to isolate the project work area until construction is complete. Straw mulch would be placed on exposed soils in the abandoned road segment. There are no riparian areas affected by the project.

4.3 Other Alternatives Considered and Not Carried Forward

DNR considered rebuilding the damaged section of the Q-Line Road at the existing location. This alternative, however, was more expensive and would require stabilizing the steep slope in sloughing areas and cutting into the hillslope for a full bench construction. Whenever possible, DNR avoids construction in overly-steepened slopes such as is the case with portion of this Q-Line Road segment. The cost to accomplish this is higher in comparison to the Proposed Action. Given the steep slopes at the damaged road site (up to 80% percent), potential for shallow rapid slides, exposed soils at the damaged site and the need to realign the road into a cut bank, rebuilding the Q-Line Road in the same locations would have considerably greater impacts on

soils, slope stability and water runoff management than the Proposed Action. For these reasons, rebuilding the Q-line Road section in its original locations was eliminated from further consideration.

5.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following sections describe the affected environment (including regulatory considerations) and environmental consequences of the Alternatives on physical, biological, recreational and cultural resources in the project area. The level of detail for each resource topic is commensurate with the scale and context of the proposed project and the potential impacts of the project alternatives on that resource.

The NEPA compliance process requires federal agencies to consider direct and indirect impacts to the environment. For each resource category, the impact analysis follows the same general approach in terms of impact findings. When possible, quantitative information is provided to establish impacts. Qualitatively, these impacts will be measured as outlined below.

Impact Scale	Criteria
None/Negligible	The resource area would not be affected, or changes would be either non-detectable or if detected, would have effects that would be slight and local. Impacts would be well below regulatory standards, as applicable.
Minor	Changes to the resource would be measurable, although the changes would be small and localized. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, as applicable. Mitigation measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Moderate	Changes to the resource would be measurable and have both localized and regional scale impacts. Impacts would be within or below regulatory standards, but historical conditions are being altered on a short-term basis. Mitigation measures would be necessary and the measures would reduce any potential adverse effects.
Major	Changes would be readily measurable and would have substantial consequences on a local and regional level. Impacts would exceed regulatory standards. Mitigation measures to offset the adverse effects would be required to reduce impacts, though long-term changes to the resource would be expected.

As described in Chapter 1, certain resource topics are not evaluated in detail because the project alternatives would have no effect on those resources or effects are known and minimal. These include air quality, noise, land use and select socioeconomics elements, transportation, and visual quality.

5.1 Physical Resources

5.1.1 Geology and Soils

The project is located near Porter, WA in the Lower Chehalis State Forest (LCSF) (see Figure 1.1-1, Project Location). The LCSF is located in part of a low-lying mountain range along the eastern boundary Grays Harbor County known as the Willapa Hills, a physiogeographic province of the Coast Range (Lasmanis 1991). The Willapa Hills physiographic province includes the Black Hills, Doty Hills, and the adjacent broad valleys that open up to the Pacific Ocean. Exposed rock consists of marine and non-marine sedimentary rocks interbedded with volcanic rock. Hills are mainly rounded peaks and ridges of basalt (SCS 1990). Soils in the project area are mapped as Centralia loam (NCRS 2009). The Centralia soil series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in residuum and colluvium weathered from sandstone. There are no hydric soils present on the proposed construction site and road abandonment segment.

The proposed project alignment traverses a low-lying hilltop (~ 650 ft above sea level) that divides the Gaddis Creek (to the north) and Rock Creek (to the south) drainages. These drainages are two of several small northeasterly flowing drainages that drain into the Chehalis River. The damaged road section is on steep slopes (greater than 50 percent) in the Gaddis drainage. The 8-12% slope range of the new segment construction will maintain a slow runoff and water erosion hazard. The local project area has no history of channel disturbances. Shallow sloughing at the outside margins of a fill is a limited slope failure which can contribute significantly to erosion and sedimentation but does not directly threaten the road. Shallow sloughing is usually the result of inadequate surface protection. Improper fill compaction or building on a weak soil layer could be a reason for this type of failure, but in this instance the cause is likely from building on too steep a side slope.

5.1.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to relocate Q-Line Road. The hillside would continue to slump, cause road damage, and the WA DNR would conduct repairs to the extent possible until the road became no longer usable. Road damage and construction for repairs would cause ground disturbance and minor to moderate associated impacts, such as soil erosion and potential sedimentation to downstream resources.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

The Proposed Action to relocate Q-Line Road out of a geologically unstable area would result in less soil impacts and stability-related issues, as this alternative would avoid the steep, unstable area on which the road is currently located. Soil impacts from the construction of the new road segment would be minor and short-term, based on the small scale of the project and minor

ground-disturbing activities. In addition, best management practices (BMPs) for erosion control, as described in Section (4.2, Description of Proposed Action) of this EA, would be followed.

5.2 Water Resources

5.2.1 Surface and Groundwater

The project vicinity is located in the Upper Chehalis Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 23, near a north-south ridgeline. The project area straddles the Gaddis and Rock Creek subbasins in the Upper Chehalis basin. Total annual precipitation for the area is about 68 inches (Malone-Porter gauge) and is the main contributor to surface and subsurface flows. The Gaddis and Rock Creek basins upper reaches are generally comprised of confined, steep, relatively straight, tributaries.

Washington's Water Quality Assessment lists the status of water quality for a particular location in one of five categories recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). No waters in the project area are 303(d) listed as an impaired water of the state (WDOE 2008).

Based on review of DNR stream typing mapping and review of topographic maps, there are no streams in the vicinity of the proposed Q-Line Road realignment. The closest mapped streams include Rock Creek which is located approximately 1,100 feet to the south of the alignment and an unnamed stream located approximately 1,900 feet to the north east. Both streams are tributaries to the Chehalis River.

5.2.2 Floodplains (EO 11988) and Wetlands (EO 1190)

As noted, there are no surface water resources within the project vicinity. EO 11988 for Floodplain Management requires federal agencies to take action to minimize the occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid adverse effects and incompatible development in the floodplain. Executive Order (EO) 11990 for the Protection of Wetlands requires federal agencies to follow avoidance, mitigation, and preservation procedures with public input before implementing construction that has the potential to affect wetlands. There is no wetland in the vicinity, and the site is not located in a floodplain. Information relating to wetland and floodplain was gathered from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps (USFWS 2011a, WDFW 2010), the DNR Forest Practices Application Review System (DNR 2011) and FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map Community Panel #300570475B.

The closest mapped wetland and floodplain are about 0.75 mile east of the project site within the Chehalis River lowland.

Soils in the project area are the Centralia Series and are well-drained loamy soils with low capacity to retain water near and are not listed as hydric (wetland soil) on the national (NRCS 2011a) or Grays Harbor County hydric soil lists (NRCS 2011b).

5.2.3 Coastal Zone

In accordance with the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), actions affecting coastal resources that involve federal activities, federal licenses or permits, and federal assistance programs (funding as in the current case), are required to be consistent with Washington's Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) to the "maximum extent practicable." According to the CZMP, Grays Harbor County is a coastal county, and therefore, subject to review of the project's potential effects on coastal resources and consistency concurrence will be required from the Washington State Department of Ecology for the project.

5.2.4 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not provide funding to relocate Q-Line Road. Potential on-going repairs to the damaged road would likely cause ground disturbance and minor associated impacts such as soil erosion and a small potential of sedimentation to downstream resources.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

The proposed location of the new segment has an overall average gradient of about 8%, and is much more suitable for managing road runoff and into ditches for percolation and upland forest floor distribution. Topographic and Forest Practices Application and Review System Maps indicate the damaged site and proposed road segment are located on a ridgeline, and all the closest surface waters (streams), are at least 1,000 feet away from the road alignment. Although the road would be more stable under Alternative 2, impacts to surface waters under either alternative would likely negligible.

The applicant will be required to contact the Washington State Department of Ecology to insure compliance with the CZMP. Because no coastal water or freshwater streams or rivers will be impacted by the Proposed Action, coastal zone resources are not anticipated to be impacted by the proposal.

5.3 Biological Resources

The project area is located in the Chehalis River Basin. The primary land use in this region is commercial forestry in the uplands and agriculture along the Chehalis River and the lower reaches of the tributaries (CRB 2012). The DNR owns in excess of 100,000 acres of land in the middle Chehalis basin, approximately 40% of the total area, concentrated in the Capitol State Forest and the Lower Chehalis State Forest. This land in managed for timber production as well as recreational activities.

Due to the DNR land base being used for timber production, the majority of the land within the middle Chehalis basin is covered in second- and third-growth coniferous forest varying in age

from recently cut to 60 years old. Little old-growth forest is found in this area, although remnant patches of uncut timber are found in a few locations.

5.3.1 Vegetation

The dominant tree species in the middle Chehalis basin are Douglas-fir, western hemlock, western red cedar, and red alder. Black cottonwood is common along the Chehalis River.

Vegetation along the west side of the road segment to be decommissioned is primarily young second or third growth Douglas-fir forest with pockets of alder. The uphill side of the road to be decommissioned, which is also the location of the proposed new alignment, was previously harvested. As a consequence of harvest operations, the uphill side of the decommissioned road and location for the new road segment are treeless, and are comprised primarily of forbs, herbs and shrubs: Sword fern, Oregon grape, lambs ear, lady fern, and common foxglove.

5.3.2 Fish and Wildlife

This subarea of the Chehalis basin supports a wide variety of wildlife species. Key species of recreational interest include blacktail deer, Roosevelt elk, black bear, waterfowl and ruffed grouse. Bald eagles and ospreys are common along the Chehalis River, using the streamside trees for nesting and roosting. Spotted owls also are found within this basin.

The distribution of fish species found within the Chehalis basin is greatly influenced by the size of the watercourse/water body. The smallest headwater systems typically contain only a few species, usually cutthroat trout and sculpin. In slightly larger systems, coho salmon, steelhead, and anadromous cutthroat trout are found, providing there is no blockage to migration. The lower reaches of the major tributaries and the mainstem are used seasonally by fall Chinook salmon and chum salmon. Non-salmonid fish occupying these river habitats include a wide variety of native and introduced species. The lower reaches of the major tributaries and the mainstem are used seasonally by fall Chinook salmon and chum salmon for spawning and freshwater rearing, typically from September through June. Spring Chinook salmon adults and smolts migrate through the middle Chehalis basin from April through June (CRB, 2012).

5.3.2.1 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 directs federal agencies to consult with the USFWS or NMFS, as applicable, when an action has the potential to affect any federally-listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species, or would result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated or proposed critical habitat. Lists of federally endangered and threatened species and designated critical habitats with the potential to occur in Grays Harbor County/the project area were obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and are included in Appendix B. Additional records were reviewed such as WDFW fish distribution data (SalmonScape) and StreamNET database records and the USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper.

There are no federally listed amphibians, reptiles, or plants documented in Grays Harbor. Other Federally listed species in the County include the marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl, Short-tailed albatross, western snowy plover, bull trout and Oregon silverspot butterfly. Critical habitat is designated for bull trout, marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl and western snowy plover.

The project area does not contain habitat for the Oregon silverspot bufferfly, short tailed albatross, western snowy plover, bull trout, nor is bull trout Critical Habitat present. The Short tailed albatross, Oregon silverspot bufferfly and short tailed albatross all live in or within extremely close proximity to marine environments (USFWS, 2012). Because the proposed project is located at least 1,000 feet from any watercourses, the bull trout and associated critical habitat would not be affected.

Marbled Murrelet and Spotted Owl

The DNR conducts its forest management operations under two Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) developed with and approved by the USFWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services): Forest Practices HCP (1997) and State Trust Lands HCP (2005), which address federal requirements of the ESA. If conducted in a manner consistent with those HCPs and their Implementation Agreement and Incidental Take Permit, ESA requirements for consultation with the Services is considered completed. Other federal, state, and local laws still apply and must be complied with. DNR approved HCPs also fulfill Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act.

As noted, the new road segment will be construction in accordance with approved HCPs, as described in the proposed project description (Section 4.2). No marbled murrelet detections have been identified in the project area, nor does the project area occur within spotted owl management circles (pers. Comm., DNR Engineer B. Freeman, 2012).

Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

Listed (threatened and endangered) fish species are not present in the project vicinity; however, the Chehalis River and associated tributaries are EFH for coho and Chinook salmon.

5.3.2.2 Migratory Birds

The project area is generally within the Pacific Flyway and provides habitat for migratory bird species, including songbirds and birds of prey. The USFWS Office of Migratory Bird Management maintains a list of migratory birds (50 CFR 10.13). The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended, prohibits the “take” of migratory birds, their active nest, eggs, and parts from harm, sale or other injurious actions. The nesting season for migratory birds in the region is generally from March 1st to August 31st.

5.3.3 Consequences of Alternatives

Alternative 1 – No Action

Under this alternative, no construction would occur and biological resources not be impacted from associated ground disturbing activities. Any ongoing road repairs would have negligible impacts on fish and wildlife.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Vegetation

As previously noted, the location for the proposed new road alignment is sited within an area that that is managed for forest production. The site was previously harvested, and therefore, the proposal would not include removal of any trees, and would only include the disturbance of existing shrubs, forbs and grasses along the road alignment. The vegetation loss would be small and localized and would affect an extremely minor proportion of the native plant species. Erodible soils disturbed during road construction will be seeded with noninvasive plant species and the decommissioned road segment would be planted with shrub and tree species. As a consequence of the Proposed Action, which includes decommission and restoration of 200 feet of road, a net gain of 0.2 acre of forest would be realized.

Wildlife

Due to nearly a century of intensive timber management and road building practices in this area, the Proposed Action is not expected to affect general wildlife (non-listed species) beyond the status quo for common practices in the area, and impacts to wildlife species are anticipated to be negligible from the proposed action. Short-term noise and visual disturbance would occur during the construction that might displace some wildlife species associated with early successional forest habitats. There is, however, substantial wildlife habitat available in the surrounding area for any displaced species. Long-term impacts to wildlife are expected to be negligible.

Marbled Murrelet and Spotted Owl

As noted, the Proposed Action would adhere to provisions in the DNR HCP, which enables the DNR to comply with ESA requirements and allow for forest production by providing conservation objectives and strategies that provide habitat for listed and unlisted species.

No or negligible effects are anticipated to these species for the following reasons: 1) The Proposed Action will comply with the DNR HCPs, 2) no trees will be removed in the project area (road alignment treeless), 3) timber in the general vicinity of the project area is second- and third-growth, with little nesting potential for the species, and 4) there are no known detections of

marbled murrelets in the project area, and the project area is not within spotted owl management circles.

Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

The Proposed Action would have no or a negligible impact on EFH. Seasonal stormwater runoff would occur in the area of the proposed road alignment. As identified in Section 4.2, however, BMPs will be implemented during and after construction. No-fish bearing waters are in the project area and the closest stream is at least 1,000 feet away. Therefore, no adverse impacts to fish or fish habitat are anticipated.

Migratory Birds

The immediate project vicinity is not prime nesting habitat for migratory birds; as it is treeless and composed of forbs and grasses. In addition, there are a number of forest roads, in close proximity, intersecting and paralleling each other which diminish nesting habitat value due to increased predator potential caused from habitat fragmentation. The surrounding area has ample habitat offering nesting, brood rearing, foraging, and staging habitat for forest bird species. No or negligible impacts, therefore, are anticipated to migratory bird species.

5.4 Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are defined as any human-created sites, structures, or objects that are of historical significance to the local area, region, state, or nation, in providing information and education of ethnic, religious, or social groups, activities, or places. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that federally-funded actions take into account cultural resources in and around a project site, in cooperation with the state, tribes, and local governments. Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800) outline the procedures to be followed in the documentation, evaluation, and mitigation of impacts to cultural resources. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) at the WA Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) is responsible for administering state-level programs.

This EA evaluates the potential project-related effects on cultural resources in accordance with the requirements of Section 106, including consultation with the SHPO and Native American tribes.

Prehistoric Context (American Indian/Religious Sites/Tribal Interests)

The Grays Harbor County Area was likely first inhabited between 6,000 to 12,000 years ago by small nomadic groups that subsisted on hunting, fishing and gathering (NPS 2012). Over the next several thousand years, the overall trend in the prehistoric history of the region was the transition from a highly mobile foraging system to an increased dependence on aquatic

resources. The coastal areas emphasized the use of large sea mammals while inhabitants near creeks and rivers likely relied more heavily upon salmon.

The residents of what would become Grays Harbor County were members of the Quinault Tribe along the coast north of Grays Harbor and the Chehalis of the lower Chehalis River drainage (WDAHP 2012). Other tribes in the area included the Queets, Humptulips, Satsop, Wynoochee, and Copalis. The Grays Harbor area tribes lived in permanent villages along rivers and lakes. They harvested salmon, as well as whales and seals along the coast. In the summers, hunters ranged inland and into the Olympic Mountains for game and to trade with other tribal groups.

Historic Context

It was the late 1700s to early 1800s that Euro-American explores made their first appearance in the area. In1792 Robert Gray, a Boston fur trader, entered the bay that would later be called Chehalis Bay, then Grays Harbor (WDAHP 2012). More significant contact began in the 1820s and 1839s with the expansion of fur traders from Hudson's Bay Company. The U.S. Exploring Expedition under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, mapped the Chehalis River, Grays Harbor, and the coast down to Cape Disappointment in 1841.

In the 1840s, more settlers occupied the area with further expansion of the fur trade. In 1854, the Territorial Legislature created Chehalis County, which at the time, encompassed most of southwest Washington. The remainder of the 1800s and into the early 1900s saw increased logging and milling. The Pope and Talbot Lumber Company and its subsidiaries and the Northern Pacific Railroad came to dominate the economy, and Grays Harbor County expanded rapidly. Immigrants from all over the world came to Grays Harbor County to work in the timber industry.

Historic Properties

A review of existing data from the DAHP showed no known historic or archaeological sites or districts in or near (within ½ mile) of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). A FEMA Historic Preservation Specialist visited the project area on June 22, 2012, and walked the flagged route of the proposed realignment. The proposed bypass passes through a recently logged area; the ground surface of the whole area is considerably disturbed; ground visibility was very limited in this area, but the combination of slopes and the distance from water suggests a relatively low likelihood of the existence of any undiscovered or intact archaeological resources in the area. Decommissioning the existing 700' segment of the Q-Line Road will also affect only previously disturbed soils.

As part of the scoping process for this EA, FEMA consulted with the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis to determine if there are any historic properties of religious or cultural significance to them in the APE. No response was received from the Tribes.

5.4.1. Consequences of Alternatives

Alternative 1-No Action

Under Alternative 1, FEMA would not provide funds to DNR, and no significant ground-disturbing activities would take place. As a result, Alternative 1 would result in no effect on cultural resources.

Alternative 2-Proposed Action

Thee cultural resources evaluation found that the proposed road realignment was previously disturbed and its topography and distant location from surface water resources suggest a low likelihood of the existence of any undiscovered and intact archaeological resources in this area. There are also no recorded historic or cultural resources within the project area. Therefore, the Proposed Action is not expected to affect cultural resources. Consultation was completed with DAHP, which concurred on October 29, 2012 with FEMA's findings (see Appendix C). As further protection, in the event of an unanticipated discovery during construction, in compliance with various state and Federal laws protecting cultural resources, including Section 106 of the NHPA, all construction work shall cease in the immediate vicinity of the find until appropriate parties (including the SHPO and the Tribes) are consulted and an appropriate plan to evaluate the resource is established.

5.5 Socioeconomic Resources

5.5.1 Environmental Justice (EO 12898)

Executive Order (EO) 12898, Environmental Justice, directs federal agencies to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations in the US resulting from federal programs, policies, and activities. Socioeconomic and demographic data for residents in the project vicinity were studied to determine if a disproportionate number (defined as greater than 50 percent) of minority or low-income persons have the potential to be affected by the project alternatives.

The project area is in Lower Chehalis State Forest, which is public land managed by DNR. The area is managed for forest production, but also provides for some recreation opportunities (e.g., camping, hiking, hunting, equestrian use, mountain biking, and ORV use). The area serves Grays Harbor County and small portions of Thurston County. Therefore, for the purpose of evaluating Environmental Justice effects in this EA, the affected environment is defined as the population Grays Harbor County.

The 2011 U.S. Census reported there were 72,546 people living Grays Harbor County, with 88.3 percent white, 8.9 percent Hispanic or Latino origin, 5.1 percent American Indian, 1.3 percent black, 1.5 percent Asian, 0.3 percent Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander and 3.5 percent reporting 2 or more races (Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories). From 2006 to 2010, 16.1 percent of the city population had incomes below the poverty level, compared to 12.1 percent for the county.

5.5.2 Public Health and Safety

Public health and safety for the DNR lands is managed through the authority of Washington Administrative Code (WAC). WAC 332-52-100 provides authority of managing recreation and public use. Under this authority the DNR can limit any recreation activity or public use on department-managed lands to protect public safety, natural resources, or other property. Under WAC 332-52-105, the DNR can establish or limit the number of individuals and vehicles allowed in any given developed recreation facility on department-managed lands at any given time or period.

5.5.3 Consequences of Alternatives

Alternative 1 – No Action and Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Neither the No Action (1) nor Proposed Action (2) would result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations, because the project is located in undeveloped forest lands and there are no minority or low income populations present in the project area. Furthermore, implementation of the Proposed Action would provide access to all demographic groups. Although there might be safety concerns relating to the No Action Alternative relating to future potential failure of the existing road, the DNR would close off this road and restrict commercial and recreational use should safety concerns arise.

6.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

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

A search of the Grays Harbor County Tax Assessor's records indicates that here are 239 tax parcels represented within a 2-mile radius of the project area. The majority of land use within this area is forestry and agricultural, and the majority of residential properties located within 2-miles of the project area, are associated with large farms in the Chehalis River valley. Over half of the area is public land and the remaining 2/3 of private land in forestry or agricultural use. No subdivision activities have occurred in the area nor will the area likely be subdivided in the future, as the majority of the area is zoned for Long-term Agricultural Use with a 40-acre

minimum lot size and General Development Five with a 5-acre minimum lot size. Additionally the flood characteristics of the Chehalis River valley and steep forested upland are not ideal for development.

The County Planning Division permit records indicate that within the 2-mile project area radius: 1) no significant development has occurred within the past 5-years; 2) no significant development is presently occurring and; 3) no significant development is permitted to occur within the next year. Additionally, no reasonably foreseeable projects (5-year horizon) are anticipated within 2-miles of the project area.

Due to the limited scope of the work and the proposed mitigation (see description of the Proposed Action), project impacts are not expected to contribute a measurable amount to cumulative effects.

7.0 PERMITTING, PROJECT CONDITIONS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The DNR is required to obtain and comply with all local, state, and federal permits and authorizations, as applicable, prior to implementing the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action shall comply with the scope of work in the FEMA PA grant application.

The following mitigation measures are required as project conditions for FEMA funding:

1. Failure to obtain and comply with all appropriate local, state, and federal permits and authorizations may jeopardize federal funding.

2. The DNR is responsible for selecting, implementing, monitoring, and maintaining appropriate BMPs to control erosion and sediment, reduce spills and pollution, and provide habitat protection. Areas of disturbed soil need to be properly compacted to eliminate settling and erosion issues. Access roads and work areas must use existing access ways whenever possible and minimize soil disturbance and compaction. Revegetation of both Proposed Action sites should use species native to the project area or region. Noxious or invasive species may not be used.

3. In the event historically or archaeologically significant materials or sites (or evidence thereof) are discovered during the implementation of the project or should any cultural material (e.g., prehistoric stone tools or flaking, human remains, historic material caches) be encountered during construction, the project shall be halted in the immediate area where materials are found and all reasonable measures taken to avoid or minimize harm to property until such time as the applicant and FEMA, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Tribes, and Washington Emergency Management, determines appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in

compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

4. Any change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation for compliance with NEPA and other laws and Executive Orders prior to implementation.

8.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public had the opportunity to comment on the Draft EA for 30 days after following its posting on the WA DNR website with publication of a notice. The notice identifies the action, location of the proposed site, participants, and how to access the Draft EA and provide comments. No comments were received.

9.0 CONCLUSION

This EA evaluated the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives. Based on findings to date, if the Proposed Action were implemented with the mitigation measures, best management practices, and conservation measures identified in this EA and conditions of other agency approvals, no significant environmental impacts were identified that would warrant the need to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).

10.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Dominguez, Lawrence, Environmental Specialist, FEMA Region X
Kerschke, Bill, Environmental Specialist, FEMA Region X

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Appendix-A: Federally Listed Species List

LISTED AND PROPOSED ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES AND CRITICAL HABITAT; CANDIDATE SPECIES; AND SPECIES OF CONCERN IN GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY AS PREPARED BY THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE WASHINGTON FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE

(Revised March 15, 2012)

LISTED

Bull trout *(Salvelinus confluentus)*
Marbled murrelet *(Brachyramphus marmoratus)*
Northern spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis caurina)*
Oregon silverspot butterfly *(Speyeria zerene hippolyta)*
Short-tailed albatross *(Phoebastria albatrus)* [outer coast]
Western snowy plover *(Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus)*

Major concerns that should be addressed in your Biological Assessment of project impacts to listed animal species include:

1. Level of use of the project area by listed species.

2. Effect of the project on listed species' primary food stocks, prey species, and foraging areas in all areas influenced by the project.

3. Impacts from project activities and implementation (e.g., increased noise levels, increased human activity and/or access, loss or degradation of habitat) that may result in disturbance to listed species and/or their avoidance of the project area.

DESIGNATED

Critical habitat for bull trout
Critical habitat for the marbled murrelet
Critical habitat for the northern spotted owl
Critical habitat for the western snowy plover

PROPOSED

None

CANDIDATE

Fisher *(Martes pennanti)* – West Coast DPS
Streaked horned lark *(Eremophila alpestris strigata)*

Yellow-billed cuckoo *(Coccyzus americanus)*

SPECIES OF CONCERN

Aleutian Canada goose *(Branta canadensis leucopareia)*
Bald eagle *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)*
Brown pelican *(Pelecanus occidentalis)* [outer coast]
Cascades frog *(Rana cascadae)*
Coastal cutthroat trout *(Oncorhynchus clarki clarki)* [southwest Washington DPS]
Columbia torrent salamander *(Rhyacotriton kezeri)*
Long-eared myotis *(Myotis evotis)*
Long-legged myotis *(Myotis volans)*
Makah's copper (butterfly) *(Lycaena mariposa charlottensis)*
Newcomb's littorine snail *(Algamorda newcombiana)*
Northern goshawk *(Accipiter gentilis)*
Northern sea otter *(Enhydra lutris kenyoni)*
Olive-sided flycatcher *(Contopus cooperi)*
Olympic torrent salamander *(Rhyacotriton olympicus)*
Pacific lamprey *(Lampetra tridentata)*
Pacific Townsend's big-eared bat *(Corynorhinus townsendii townsendii)*
Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)*
River lamprey *(Lampetra ayresi)*
Tailed frog *(Ascaphus truei)*
Tufted puffin *(Fratercula cirrhata)*
Van Dyke's salamander *(Plethodon vandykei)*
Western gray squirrel *(Sciurus griseus griseus)*
Western toad *(Bufo boreas)*
Aster curtus (white-top aster)
Cimicifuga elata (tall bugbane)
Dodecatheon austrofrigidum (frigid shootingstar)
Sanicula arctopoides (footsteps of spring; bear's-foot sanicle)

Appendix B – Cultural Resources Concurrence Letters and Washington SHPO Concurrence

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Region X
130 228th Street, SW
Bothell, WA 98021-9796

FEMA

July 27, 2012

Allyson Brooks, Ph.D.
State Historic Preservation Officer
Washington Department of Archaeology
and Historic Preservation
PO Box 48343
Olympia, Washington 98504-8343

Re: FEMA-4056-DR-WA, PW-00562 Q-Line Road Realignment, WA Dept. of Natural Resources

Dear Dr. Brooks:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has taken steps necessary to identify historic properties or other cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the above Undertaking per 36 CFR Part 800. The purpose of this letter is to transmit project details and to request your concurrence with FEMA's APE and finding of effects.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources has submitted a grant application for FEMA funding assistance for the realignment of the damaged Q-Line Road in the Lower Chehalis State Forest, Grays Harbor County (Undertaking). The original road, a major forestland management arterial, was damaged by January 2012 floods which resulted in a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

The Department proposes to construct a new 550-foot-segment gravel road across a previously harvested and replanted area of forest land. The road is located in the Lower Chehalis State Forest as shown on the enclosed maps (from latitude 46.9045 and longitude -123.3423 to 46.9044 and -123.3440). The new alignment would link the undamaged portions of the Q-Line Road. The new road would have a 16-foot subgrade width, and a 1:5 slope of toe for a total 50-foot-wide disturbance area. Road construction would primarily be accomplished using a dozer, grader, and excavator with some work done by hand. The road subgrade consists of 4-inch-minus jaw-run crushed rock. Road surface will be comprised of 2-inch-minus crushed rock. This Undertaking will also decommission/abandon a 700-foot segment of the existing road. The decommissioning action includes revegetation of a 300-foot section of the abandoned roadbed, with the remainder of the road gradually returning to a natural state.

FEMA has determined that the APE for this Undertaking consists of the area of new road construction, approximately 50 feet x 550 feet, and the alignment to be decommissioned, as shown on the enclosed aerial. A review of Washington Division of Archaeology and Historic Preservation records reveals no reported archaeological sites or historic resources within the APE. While there are a number of nearby archaeological sites recorded, there are none identified within ½-mile of the APE. Consultation has also been initiated with Tribes to help determine if the Undertaking may

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affect historic properties that may be of religious or cultural significance. Given the small scale of the project and prior subsurface disturbance from timber harvesting with heavy equipment and replanting, no on-site identification efforts were initiated.

Barring information provided by Tribes; given the lack of known historic properties within the APE, the nature of the activities, and project area conditions; the potential for intact historic properties to be affected by this Undertaking is low. Furthermore, FEMA will condition the project grant award to protect historic resources inadvertently discovered during implementation. Accordingly, FEMA has made a "No Historic Properties Affected" determination for this Undertaking.

We respectfully request your concurrence with these findings or additional comment. Per our Programmatic Agreement, should you not object to these findings within 14 days of receipt of this letter, FEMA will assume concurrence and proceed with funding. Thank you for your review of this project and if you have any questions, please contact at (425) 487-4713 or by e-mail: science.kilner@fema.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

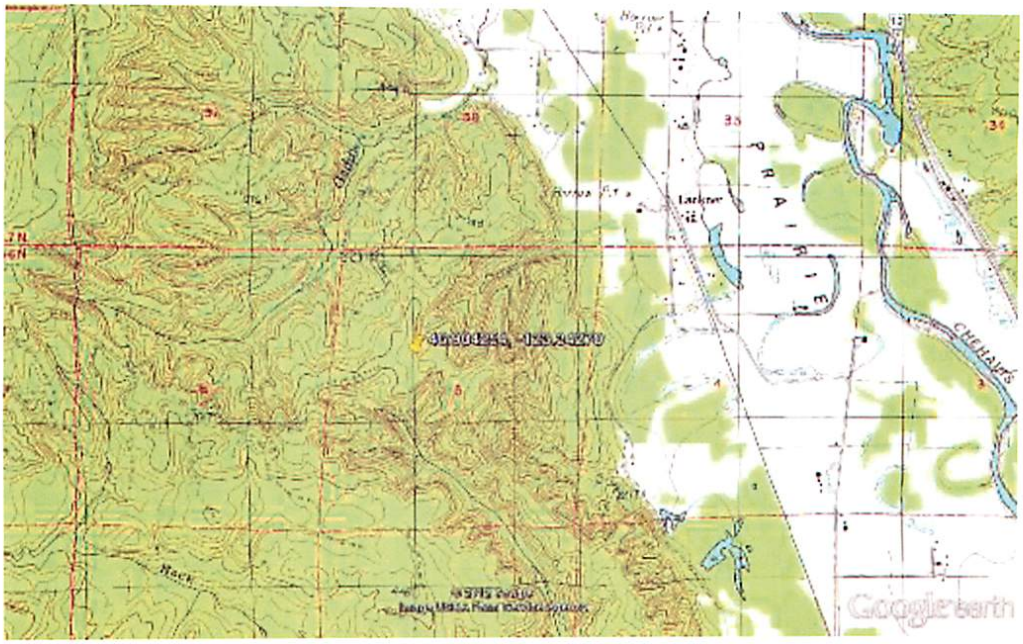
Barry Hall for

Science Kilner
Acting Regional Environmental Officer

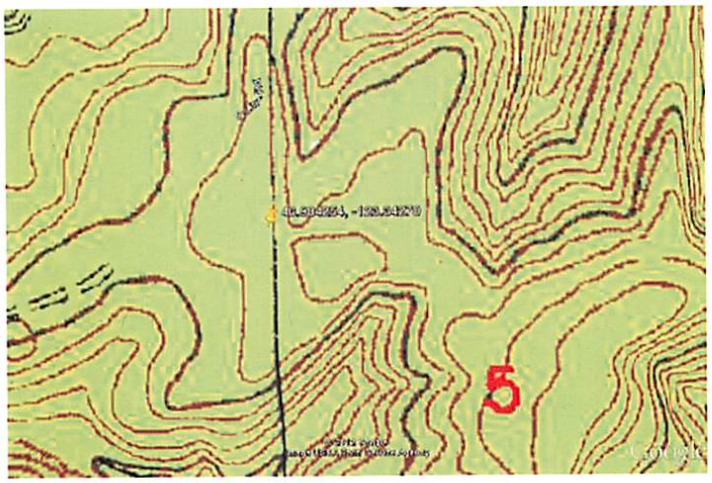
Enclosures:

1. General project location
2. Specific location of road realignment
3. Project area showing proposed work
4. Photo of new alignment

SK:bb



1. General location of project.



2. Specific location of road realignment

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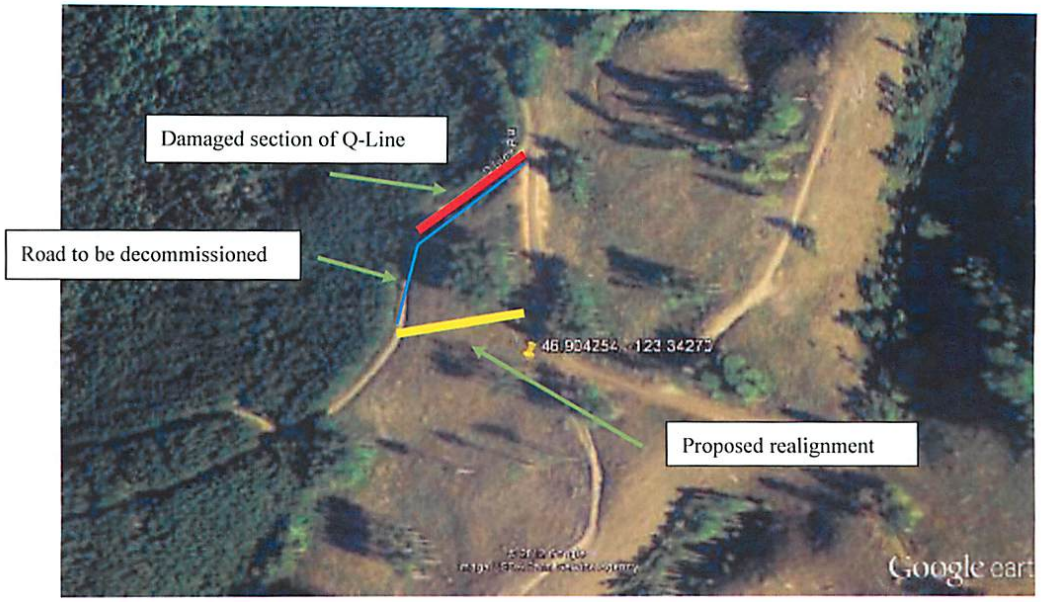

3. Project area showing proposed work.

www.fema.gov

STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

1063 S. Capitol Way, Suite 106 • Olympia, Washington 98501
Mailing address: PO Box 48343 • Olympia, Washington 98504-8343
(360) 586-3065 • Fax Number (360) 586-3067 • Website: www.dahp.wa.gov

October 29, 2012

Ms. Science Kilner
FEMA – Region X
130 – 228th Street SW
Bothell, Washington 98021-9796

RE: Q-Line Road Realignment Project
FEMA-4056-DR-WA / PW-00562
Log No: 102912-23-FEMA

Dear Ms. Kilner:

Thank you for contacting our Department. We have reviewed the materials you provided for the proposed Q-Line Road Realignment Project, Grays Harbor County, Washington.

We concur with your Determination of No Historic Properties Affected.

We would appreciate receiving any correspondence or comments from concerned tribes or other parties that you receive as you consult under the requirements of 36CFR800.4(a)(4).

In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area secured, and the concerned tribes and this department notified.

These comments are based on the information available at the time of this review and on the behalf of the State Historic Preservation Officer in conformance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations 36CFR800. Should additional information become available, our assessment may be revised. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and a copy of these comments should be included in subsequent environmental documents.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Whitlam, Ph.D.
State Archaeologist
(360) 586-3080
email: rob.whitlam@dahp.wa.gov

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Protect the Past, Shape the Future

Appendix C: Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Draft Environmental Assessment
Q-Line Road Segment Reroute,
Grays Harbor County, Washington

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) proposes to provide funds to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to relocate a section of the Q-Line Road in the Lower Chehalis State Forest in Section 5 of Township 16 North, Range 5 East, of the Willamette Meridian at Latitude 46.90425 North, Longitude -123.3427 in Grays Harbor County, WA. The subject road was damaged during severe winter storms, flooding, mudslides, landslides, and debris flows that occurred in the region during the period January 14 through the 23, 2012. The event was declared a Presidential disaster on March 12, 2012 (FEMA-4056-DR-WA).

The DNR evaluated the damage to the Q-Line Road, potential repair options and determined that, due to the damaged section of road being located on a steep slope, the best repair alternative would be to decommission a damaged section of the road and relocate the segment approximately 250 feet to the east on a flatter, stable area. Rebuilding the forest road at the damaged site would require stabilizing an area of steep slope and cutting into the side-hill. The DNR, therefore, has applied through the Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for funding of a lower cost alternative project, which bypasses the damaged steep-sloped road segment, and decommissions the damaged segment of the Q-Line Road.

FEMA prepared a Draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed project pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FEMA's implementing regulations. The EA evaluates project alternatives and compliance with applicable environmental laws and Executive Orders. The alternatives evaluated in the EA are the (1) No Action, which would entail no repairs or improvements to the road at its existing location; and (2) Proposed Action (or Preferred Alternative), decommission the damaged section of road, and relocate the segment in a more stable area. Other alternatives were considered but not carried forward in the analysis.

Analysis of the environmental impacts associated with the project alternatives is available in the Draft EA. The Draft EA is available for viewing at the following locations:

- FEMA website at: https://www.fema.gov/environmental-planning-and-historic-preservation-program/environmental-documents-and-public-notice-1

- Washington DNR website at: http://www.dnr.wa.gov

If no substantive issues are identified during the comment period, FEMA will finalize the EA, issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and fund the project. The Final EA and FONSI will be available for viewing at the FEMA website noted above. Unless substantive comments are received, FEMA will not publish another notice for this project. Please submit your written comments to FEMA Region X Environmental Officer, Science Kilner, no later than 5 p.m. December 14, 2012. Comments can be:

1. Mailed: Science Kilner, 130 228th Street SW, Bothell, Washington 98021
2. Faxed: 425-487-4613
3. E-mailed: science.kilner@fema.dhs.gov