

## Jeff Watson

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**From:** Downes, Scott G (DFW) <Scott.Downes@dfw.wa.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 31, 2016 4:21 PM  
**To:** Jeff Watson  
**Cc:** Harvester, Perry J (DFW); Renfrow, Brent D (DFW); Doc Hansen  
**Subject:** RE: Notice of Application: SP-16-00001 Mitchell-WDFW Comments  
**Attachments:** WDFW comments on Mitchell Short Plat Application.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Jeff,  
Attached are WDFW comments on this proposal. They are centered around the issue that this parcel overlaps with the Swauk Prairie deer winter range, as identified in the critical areas review. In addition to our comments, we provided a couple of suggestions that may be worth considering as alternatives to this proposal.

Let me know if you have any questions on our letter.

Thanks.

Scott

### **Scott Downes**

Fish & Wildlife Habitat Biologist  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Region 3 Habitat Program  
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Yakima, WA 98902-5720  
[Scott.Downes@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Scott.Downes@dfw.wa.gov)  
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**From:** Jeff Watson [<mailto:jeff.watson@co.kittitas.wa.us>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2016 10:43 AM  
**To:** Lisa Iammarino; Myers, Holly (DOHi); Lisa Lawrence; Patti Johnson; Kelly Bacon; Candie M. Leader; 'jessica@yakama.com'; 'jmarvin@yakama.com'; 'johnson@yakama.com'; 'enviroreview@yakama.com'; ECY RE SEPA REGISTER; ECY RE SEPA REGISTER; Clear, Gwen (ECY); Reed, Catherine D. (ECY); Renfrow, Brent D (DFW); Downes, Scott G (DFW); Nelson, Jennifer L (DFW); SEPA (DAHP); Kaehler, Gretchen (DAHP); 'Jan Jorgenson ([jorgenja@cwu.edu](mailto:jorgenja@cwu.edu))'; 'nelmsk@cwu.edu'; Michael Flory; Lou Whitford; Amber Green; Steph Mifflin; Mau, Russell E (DOH); Serr, Ben A (DOH); HAZLETT, LINDA (DNR); PRESTON, CINDY (DNR); DNR RE AQ LEASING RIVERS; 'Allison Kimball ([brooksideconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:brooksideconsulting@gmail.com))'; 'cid@fairpoint.net'; 'Joanna Markell ([jmarkell@kvnews.com](mailto:jmarkell@kvnews.com))'; 'Knaub, Deborah J NWS ([Deborah.J.Knaub@usace.army.mil](mailto:Deborah.J.Knaub@usace.army.mil))'; Josh Hink; 'office@kcf7.com'; 'wargog@cersd.org'; 'montgomeryr@cersd.org'  
**Cc:** Doc Hansen  
**Subject:** Notice of Application: SP-16-00001 Mitchell

[SP-16-00001 Mitchell](#) (Hyperlink to On-Line file)  
[SP-16-00001 Mitchell](#) (Hyperlink to County Network File)

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION:**

Kittitas County Community Development Services has received the above referenced application for a 4 lot short plat up in the Swauk\Hidden Valley area. See attached documentation for additional information or use one of the hyperlinks above to access the on-line or network file. Comments within the body of an email are encouraged but may be sent as attachment or via USPS as a hard copy.

**COMMENTS DUE BY 6/2/2016 AT 5 PM**

Jeffrey A. Watson

Planner II

[Community Development Services](#)

411 North Ruby

Ellensburg WA 98926

[jeff.watson@co.kittitas.wa.us](mailto:jeff.watson@co.kittitas.wa.us)

509-933-8274

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message id: 38eb45916c6dcbdac24bb8719d004a14



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**  
South Central Region • Region 3 • 1701 South 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720  
Telephone: (509) 575-2740 • Fax: (509) 575-2474

May 31, 2016

Jeff Watson  
Kittitas County Community Development Services, Planner II  
411 North Ruby St., Suite 2  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

RE: SP-16-00001 Mitchell Short Plat Application

Dear Mr. Watson,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed the SEPA checklist and supporting documents for the application to subdivide approximately 81.14 acres into three 20 acre lots and one 21.14 acre lot. The applicant's parcel that is being proposed to be divided from one 81.14 acre lot into three 20 acre lots and one 21.14 acre lot is within the landscape that is mapped by WDFW as being part of the Swauk Prairie deer winter range. The land is currently zoned as forest and range.

WDFW has some concerns over the proposed application, specifically regarding subdividing the parcels and how that relates to the Swauk Prairie deer winter range. During winter, the areas accessible to large animals such as deer and elk are greatly reduced. Winter range is a primary limiting factor for elk and deer populations.

**Concerns:**

WDFW is concerned about increased human development into sensitive areas such as big game winter range. Published literature suggests that deer use diminishes with density of human development. Further, literature also suggests that condition of the deer can also diminish when they are subjected to further stress potentially leading to increased mortality.

In addition to stresses that human development into deer range cause the animals, further subdividing of the land and potential subsequent development of homes increases the likelihood of negative human-animal interactions/conflicts.

**Recommendations:**

Because of the real and potential impacts to big game winter range, we recommend that division of this winter range area not be subdivided for division into small lots. If Kittitas County determines that the change to smaller parcel sizes should be approved, we recommend that conditions be placed on the change to reduce the level of impacts to wildlife. The following are alternatives to a short plat application that would also allow some future development while still maintaining some of the habitat value & quality of the area:

1. Permit the current application for subdivision, but ensure that the zoning of the lots retains the Forest and Range zoning that stipulates that the minimum lot size is: Twenty (20) acres, unless within a cluster or conservation plat as provided for in KCC Chapter 16.09, Cluster Platting and Conservation Platting;
2. Recommend revision of the short plat where a small sub-section of land (say maybe 10 acres) is allowed to be developed through the Cluster Platting, while the remaining acres are left undeveloped for habitat in the context of forest and range.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this application. Please contact me at (509) 457-9307 or [Scott.downes@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Scott.downes@dfw.wa.gov), if you have any questions or concerns regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott Downes".

Scott Downes  
Area Habitat Biologist

Cc: Brent Renfrow, WDFW  
Perry Harvester, WDFW