



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

South Central Region • Region 3 • 1701 South 24th Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720
Telephone: (509) 575-2740 • Fax: (509) 575-2474

October 14, 2024

Zach Torrance-Smith
Community Development Services
Kittitas County
411 N. Ruby Street, Suite 2
Ellensburg, WA 98926

SUBJECT: WDFW COMMENTS ON SP-24-00031 MCINTOSH SHORT PLAT

Dear Mr. Torrance-Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed short plat near Dry Creek. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is familiar with this area and nearby critical areas that should be considered as part of this review and determination process. We offer the following comments for consideration to ensure the channel migration zone of Dry Creek, its floodplain, and the associated critical areas are protected as the land uses change in this area.

We understand that this proposal is a short plat, and no development actions are currently proposed. While no critical areas report is provided with the application materials, there are several critical areas present on the subject parcels, including Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCA), wetlands, frequently flooded areas, and Geological Hazardous Areas in the form of potential channel migration zones. Prior to new parcels being created as part of this project, the applicants should clearly demonstrate that they are not creating lots that will require variances and/or reasonable use exceptions from the critical areas requirements or other relevant sections of code when development is proposed.

Dry Creek runs near the easterly boundary of the project area. Dry Creek is a fish bearing tributary to the Yakima River. Multiple native fish species are present in Dry Creek, including salmon and steelhead. Relic channels throughout the project area are now regularly used for irrigation conveyance ditches, but during flood events, these irrigation ditches routinely convey flood waters as well and these events are not captured well by the FEMA maps. WDFW will be interested in any future grading and/or water crossing structures in and around Dry Creek and other channels in the project area and a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) may be required.

To ensure new parcels created will not require variances from the critical areas ordinance or other County Codes when development is proposed, we recommend the following:

- Prior to approval of this application, complete a critical areas report that identifies all critical areas present within the project area and the required setbacks. Completing this

report and assessment will result in the identification of areas where development would be allowed without the need for variances or reasonable use exceptions.

- Consider reducing the size of the lots around existing residences to provide a larger area for potential future building envelopes on the larger, new lots.

We welcome the opportunity to work with local landowners and help them understand the fish, wildlife and habitat around them. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and please let me know if there are any questions or comments we can answer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Nelson".

Jennifer Nelson
Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Jennifer.Nelson@dfw.wa.gov
(509) 961-6639