



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

August 13, 2024

Chace Pedersen  
Kittitas County Community Development Services  
411 N. Ruby Street, Suite 2  
Ellensburg, WA 98926

SUBJECT: WDFW COMMENTS SE-24-00023 Thayer

Dear Mr. Pedersen,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SE-24-00023 regarding the Thayer Riprap Site Soil Import project application. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed the application and supporting documents on file. Our comments are regarding the project's impact on Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas, such as priority habitats and species (PHS), particularly shrubsteppe habitat.

The project area contains shrubsteppe habitat and is mapped as Manastash Ridge Mule Deer Winter Range, Manastash Ridge Elk Winter Range, and Umtanum Bighorn Sheep Annual Range, all of which are designated Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas under Kittitas County's Critical Areas Ordinance (Chapter 17A.04).

The covering of shrubsteppe habitat with topsoil will negatively impact wildlife and habitat. To ensure no net loss, we recommend avoiding and minimizing shrubsteppe impacts as much as possible by utilizing already disturbed areas on site to the maximum extent, thus limiting the amount of new disturbance.

Any new disturbance should provide compensatory mitigation consistent with WDFW's PHS guidelines, 1:1 if the shrubsteppe habitat will be restored after the topsoil is gone and the proposed project has concluded, or 2:1 if the habitat will not be restored. To further understand shrubsteppe impacts, potential for mitigation and restoration, WDFW requests a site visit with the applicant and the County. A mitigation, monitoring and restoration plan should be prepared in consultation with WDFW as a condition of approval.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the County's commitment to protecting critical areas. Please let me know if there are any questions about our comments; we look

forward to working together on this project. I can be reached by phone at (509) 406-3206 or email at [Cassandra.Weekes@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Cassandra.Weekes@dfw.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cassandra Weekes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cassandra Weekes  
Area Habitat Biologist