



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
South Central Region • Region 3 • 1701 South 24th Avenue, Yakima, WA 98902-5720
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November 23, 2016

Dusty Pilkington
Kittitas County Community Development Services, Planner I
411 North Ruby St., Suite 2
Ellensburg, WA 98926

RE: PF-16-00001 Quilomene Cove and SD-16-00001 Quilomene Cove

Dear Mr. Pilkington,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Public Facilities and Shoreline Development Permits for the floating restroom facility proposed for Quilomene Cove along the Columbia River in Kittitas County. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed the applications and supporting documents. WDFW in general is supportive of the project but has a few items to note stated below.

Background

This floating restroom is to be located in Quilomene Bay, which is managed as part of Grant County Public Utilities District (PUD); however the land adjacent to the bay is primarily managed by WDFW as part of the Quilomene Unit of the LT Murray Wildlife Area. The project is proposed as a way to reduce shoreline impacts by the public using the floating restroom rather than the associated shoreline for restroom facilities and other associated impacts related to docking of the watercraft.

Quilomene Bay is important to both fish and wildlife species with Quilomene and Brushy Creeks being used by Steelhead (a listed species) and the bay is a known concentration area for migrating and wintering waterbirds such as ducks, grebes and loons. The riparian vegetation in this bay is also critical to various wildlife species as larger riparian areas are a limited resource in this xeric environment.

Site Review and Benefits of the Project

WDFW staff, both habitat program staff and the wildlife area manager attended a site visit of the proposed project on March 31, 2016 hosted by Grant County PUD. During that site visit, the project was discussed and reviewed and it is believed that WDFW input was incorporated into the current site plans.

The design of the facility including the use of helical screws to anchor the floating restroom appear to be a proper design for the site based upon knowledge of what has worked with other

similar facilities in the Columbia Basin. If the facility is maintained and used, it should reduce the visitor use of the shoreline and thus reduce impact to the shoreline habitat. Maintenance includes both servicing the restroom but also ensuring that the structural integrity of the facility and its associated anchors are regularly checked and maintained.

Concerns and Items to Note

- Spill prevention plan. While the application lists a general concept for maintenance of the facility and removal of the waste, it is critical that a backup plan for spill monitoring and containment be developed. The site in the Columbia River is a higher risk environment and the possibility of the facility either failing or for waste removal procedures to not operate as planned is possible. A waste water spill in this area could have detrimental water quality issues to both fish and wildlife species.

- While it is noted in the SEPA checklist under required permits, WDFW is restating in this comment letter that this project will require a Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) permit for construction. That process involves submitting final design plans and construction plans for review and approval before construction on the project starts.

Please contact me at (509) 457-9307 or Scott.Downes@dfw.wa.gov, if you have any questions or concerns regarding these comments and thank you again for the opportunity to review and comment on this project and thank you to Grant County PUD for involving us in a site tour. I've also cc'd Debbie Firestone of Grant County PUD on these comments to facilitate the continuing discussion.

Sincerely,



Scott Downes
Area Habitat Biologist

Cc: Brent Renfrow, WDFW
Debbie Firestone, Grant County PUD