



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

South Central Region • Ellensburg District Office • 1130 W. University Way, Ellensburg, WA 98926

February 2, 2022

Jeremiah Cromie
Community Development Services
Kittitas County
411 North Ruby Street; Suite 2
Ellensburg, WA 98926

SUBJECT: WDFW Comments SE-21-00031 Mundy

Dear Mr. Cromie,

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed the application materials associated with the proposed project for road improvements and stormwater management and we are familiar with the project area. The properties associated with his project and surrounding area is mapped as elk winter range in WDFW's [Priority Habitats and Species on the Web tool](#). Although mapped as winter range, it is not uncommon for herds of elk to be present year-round in this area. All future development should be planned with this knowledge to reduce impacts to elk habitat AND reduce human-elk conflicts. In addition to elk, numerous other wildlife species are likely to be present, WDFW can be a resource to enhance wildlife habitat while reducing potential for human-wildlife conflicts as future development is planned. We acknowledge and support the conservation easement and conditions the property owners placed upon the properties to benefit wildlife and we wish to partner with them in this endeavor.

Masterson Ditch is present through this project area and on the County's mapping site is partially mapped as fish bearing and partially unknown through the project area. Years ago, the Masterson Irrigation Ditch was abandoned at the point of diversion in the Teanaway River near Red Bridge Road. While water was no longer diverted from the Teanaway River and conveyed via the ditch, the ditch largely remained intact for the remainder of its length to the final point of use west of the project area. Historically and currently, Masterson Ditch captures and conveys water from numerous smaller tributary streams draining off Cle Elum Ridge and ultimately this water makes it to an unnamed fish bearing tributary to the Teanaway River. WDFW would need to conduct a site visit to determine whether the water bodies identified throughout the project area are fish bearing. Prior to this determination, watercourses should not be altered without a Hydraulic Project Approval from WDFW.

In recent years, WDFW has responded to several nearby landowners with concerns about flooding that is often conveyed via Masterson Ditch and County roadside ditches. As development continues in this area, we anticipate more of these types of calls because: 1) The small, seasonal streams are often underestimated for their potential peak discharge and sometimes experience unauthorized fill; 2) Rain on snow events are predicted to increase under most climate models; and 3) The conveyance of natural streams via Masterson Ditch has not been adequately addressed. We raise this concern as it relates to stormwater management in a rural area with increasing development and have provided the photo below (Figure 1) for some evidence. We strongly urge the proponents to maintain all existing swales (as visible in the lidar) to disperse flows. The road improvements provided do not appear to accommodate the existing swales flowing southwesterly near parcels B, C and D

toward parcel A. If these flow paths are interrupted, runoff water will be routed to new areas until it collects in the roadside ditch of Masterson Road and/or on adjacent properties.



Figure 1. This photo was taken January 9, 2009 after a moderate rain on snow event. The photo was taken from an airplane looking east. Airport Road and Masterson Road are highlighted for reference and the approximate Mundy project area is circled in red.

Please feel free to contact me at (509) 961-6639 or Jennifer.nelson@dfw.wa.gov if you have any questions about these comments.

Sincerely,

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

Jennifer Nelson
Area Habitat Biologist