

**WHATCOM COUNTY**

Planning & Development Services  
5280 Northwest Drive,  
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097  
360-676-6907, TTY 800-833-6384  
360-738-2525 Fax



**David Stalheim**  
Director

**J.E. "Sam" Ryan**  
Assistant Director

**SEPA Environmental Checklist**

Purpose of Checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

Instructions for Applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about governmental regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

Use of Checklist for Non-Project Proposals:

Complete this checklist for non-project proposals, even though questions may be answered "does not apply." In addition, complete the supplemental sheet for non-project actions (part C).

For non-project actions, the references in the checklist to the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proposer," and "affected geographic area," respectively.

## A Background

- 1 Name of proposed project, if applicable:  
South Fork Park
- 2 Name of applicant: Whatcom County Parks & Recreation Department  
Applicant phone number: 360.733.2900  
Applicant address: 3373 Mount Baker Highway, Bellingham, WA 98226
- 3 Contact name: Rod Lamb  
Contact phone number: 360.733.2900  
Contact address: 3373 Mount Baker Highway, Bellingham, WA 98226
- 4 Date checklist prepared: March 2010
- 5 Agency requesting checklist: Planning & Development Services
- 6 Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):  
The project will begin in the Fall of 2010 and development will be phased over an approximate 2 year period depending on funding.
- 7 Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? Yes  No   
If yes, explain:
- 8 List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal:  
A Draft Environmental Assessment has been developed and included with this application. A Critical Areas Report and wetland delineation will be completed as necessary during final design and permitting.
- 9 Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal?  
Yes  No   
If yes, explain.
- 10 List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.  
Building Permit, Floodplain Development Permit, Forest Practices Permit, NOI to Construct a Well, NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit, NPDES Municipal Stormwater General Permit, Shoreline Substantial Development Permit, Wetlands Permit.

- 11 Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

Parks proposes to develop a parking lot, trailhead & trails at South Fork Park. The proposal includes locating a parking area and trailhead at the northern Galbraith Farm property. A multi-use trail accommodating hikers, bicycles and equestrians would extend south through reconveyance properties, Overby Farm and continue to the historic Nasset Farm at the south. See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information.

- 12 Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

South Fork Park is located east of the town of Acme. It is bordered by Mosquito Lake Road on the north, the Nooksack River on the west and private lands and Saxon Road on the south. The township and range for the project is T37N R5E. See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information.

## B Environmental Elements

### 1 Earth

- a. General description of the site:

- Flat  
 Rolling  
 Hilly  
 Steep Slopes  
 Mountainous  
 Other

- b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)?

80-100%

- c. What general types of soils are found on the site (for example, clay, sand, gravel, peat, muck)? If you know the classification of agricultural soils, specify them and note any prime farmland.

(3)-Andic Xerochrepts, (6) Barneston gravelly loam, (7) Barneston very gravelly loam, (9) Barneston very gravelly loam, (95) Larush silt loam, (119) Pilchuck loamy fine sand, (130) Riverwash, (144) Shalcar and Fishtrap soils. et al

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? Yes  No

If so, describe.

Slides have occurred within the area of the proposed Park, but not on Park property.

- e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed.

Site grading will be necessary to construct the entrance road, parking area and proposed trails to achieve proper longitudinal and cross slopes for accessibility and drainage (approx. 7,700 CY) +

Indicate source of fill.

On site soils will be utilized to the greatest extent possible. Imported gravel from a local quarry will be necessary for the entrance road, parking area and trails.

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

Site construction will require removing surface vegetation within the development areas. Temporarily exposed soils pose an erosion risk. Proper erosion control measures will be used at all times +

- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)?

Less than 1 percent. The site totals 890 acres; the proposed parking area, trailhead, restroom building, picnic shelter, and trails total approximately 8 acres. +

- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any:

Vegetation will be preserved to the extent most practicable. Trails will be constructed of crushed gravel and graded to provide sheet run-off, and infiltration will occur in vegetated buffers.

## 2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, or industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed?

Equipment emissions and dust

If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

Unknown.

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any:

During construction dust will be controlled by BMP C123, and BMP C140 as described in DOE Stormwater Management Manual for Western WA, Vol. 2 - Construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention.

### 3. Water

#### a. Surface:

- (1) Is there any surface water body on or in the immediate vicinity of the site (including year-round and seasonal streams, saltwater, lakes, ponds, wetlands)? Yes  No

If yes, describe type and provide names. If appropriate, state what stream or river it flows into.

South Fork Nooksack River, Hutchinson Creek, Pond Creek, Nessel Creek, and Ferguson Ponds.

- (2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? Yes  No

If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

A bridge will be constructed over Hutchinson Creek. Various portions of proposed trails will be constructed within 200' of the described waters. See Draft Environmental Assessment +

- (3) Estimate the amount of fill and dredge material that would be placed in or removed from surface water or wetlands and indicate the area of the site that would be affected.

Indicate the source of fill material. See Draft Environmental Assessment.

- (4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Yes  No

Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain?

Yes  No

If so, note location on the site plan.

See Draft Environmental Assessment, Appendix A and B.

(5) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters?

Yes  No

If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge

b. Ground

Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Yes  No

Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

A well is planned to provide drinking water for users and stock animals.

(1) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals.....; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

Domestic sewage from two stall restroom facility. The septic system will be approximately 2,500 square feet (includes backup facility).

c. Water runoff (including stormwater):

(1) Describe the source of runoff (including storm water) and method of collection and disposal, if any (include quantities, if known).

Stormwater runoff will be generated by the gravel access road, parking area, trails, picnic shelter and restroom roofs. Where possible BMP T5.30-Full Dispersal stormwater management is proposed. BMP T5.11 &

Where will this water flow? On-site vegetated buffers.

Will this water flow into other waters? Yes  No

If so, describe.

(2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters?

Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

Should the septic field fail, waste material could enter ground water. However the septic field will be properly engineered and inspected to avoid ground water contamination.

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water impacts, if any:

Appropriate stormwater strategies identified in Vol. 5-Runoff Treatment BMPs of DOE Stormwater Management Manual for Western WA will be implemented to address increased surface runoff.

#### 4 Plants

a. Check types of vegetation found on the site:

- Deciduous tree: alder, maple, aspen, other
- Evergreen tree: fir, cedar, pine, other
- Shrubs
- Grass
- Pasture
- Crop or grain
- Wet soil plants: cattail, buttercup, bullrush, skunk cabbage, other
- Water plants: water lily, eelgrass, milfoil, other
- Other types of vegetation

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

Some agricultural and forested lands will be cleared during construction of the access road, parking area and trails. See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information. +

c. List threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

None of the 9 Washington State threatened or endangered plant species listed in the Federal Register are known to be on or near the Park site.

- d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance vegetation on the site, if any:

Native plants will be used to restore disturbed areas associated with park development.

5. Animals

- a. Check any birds and animals, which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

Birds:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawk,                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heron,     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eagle,                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Songbirds; |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: waterfowl, woodpeckers, etc. |  |

Mammals:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deer,                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bear,   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elk,                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beaver; |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: cougar, bobcat, coyote |   |

Fish:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bass,             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Salmon, |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trout, | <input type="checkbox"/> Herring,           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish;        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:             |

- b. List any threatened or endangered species known to be on or near the site.

South Fork early chinook salmon, bull trout, bald eagle.

- c. Is the site part of a migration route?    Yes     No

If so, explain.

The river and tributaries are migration routes for juvenile and adult salmonids (salmon, trout, and char). Migratory waterfowl also pass through or near to the project site.

d. Proposed measures to preserve or enhance wildlife, if any:

The proposed Park protects 890 acres of conifer forest, agricultural lands and riparian habitat. Improvements are located outside of significantly sensitive habitat areas. +

6. Energy and Natural Resources

a. What kinds of energy (electric, natural gas, oil, wood stove, solar) will be used to meet the completed project's energy needs? Describe whether it will be used for heating, manufacturing, etc.

Electricity will be used to provide power to the restroom and power to the proposed domestic well.

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties?      Yes       No

If so, generally describe.

c. What kinds of energy conservation features are included in the plans of this proposal? List other proposed measures to reduce or control energy impacts, if any:

A single light on the outside of the restroom structure will be controlled by solar switch, and interior lights will be controlled by a motion sensor to come on only when in use. High efficiency pumps will be used on the domestic well.

7. Environmental Health

a. Are there any environmental health hazards, including exposure to toxic chemicals, risk of fire and explosion, spill, or hazardous waste that could occur as a result of this proposal?      Yes       No

If so, describe.

Risk of forest fires exist on the park property currently, and will continue when the park is developed.

(1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

DNR currently provides fire protection in the forested lands portion of the property.

(2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

Park regulations prohibit fires in the park, such rules will be posted at the trailhead.

b. Noise

- (1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)?

Traffic noise from Mosquito Lake Road, although this appears to be minimal. See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information.

- (2) What types and levels of noise would be created by or associated with the project on a short-term or a long-term basis (for example: traffic, construction, operation, other)? Indicate what hours noise would come from the site.

Mosquito Lake Road will likely experience an increase in traffic and thereby increase the total traffic noise associated with the roadway.

- (3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:  
None.

8 Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

Conservation, Agriculture and Recreation. Adjacent land uses include residential, agricultural and forestry.

- b. Has the site been used for agriculture? Yes  No   
If so, describe.

The Gailbraith Farm located off of Mosquito Lake Road is currently leased to a private party for agricultural use. Historic agricultural uses also occurred at the Overby and Nessel Farms.

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

Several historic structures exist on Nessel Farm. There are a few remnant historic structures located at the Overby and Gailbraith Farms.

- d. Will any structures be demolished? Yes  No   
If so, what?

- e. What is the current zoning classification of the site?

Agriculture (AG), Commercial Forestry (CF) & Rural Forestry (RF).

- f. What is the current comprehensive plan designation of the site?

Agriculture (AG), Commercial Forestry (CF) & Rural Forestry (RF).

- g. If applicable, what is the current shoreline master program designation of the site?

The South Fork Nooksack River is designated "Shorline Conservancy".

- h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? Yes  No

If so, specify.

No, but critical areas such as wetlands and shorelines exist on site.

- i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project?

2

- j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace?

None

- k. Proposed measures to avoid or reduce displacement impacts, if any:

N/A

- l. Proposed measures to ensure the proposal is compatible with existing and projected land uses and plans, if any:

See Draft Environmental Assessment

## 9 Housing

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

An existing caretaker's residence exists on the Nasset Farm property, no other units are planned.

- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing.

None

- High  
 Middle  
 Low-income

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any:

N/A

## 10 Aesthetics

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed?

The restroom facility is approximately 15' tall. It's exterior surfaces are earth-tone colored concrete walls and roof structure.

- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed?

The view of Gailbraith Farm from Mosquito Lake Road will be slightly altered by construction of the proposed access road, parking area and trailhead.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any:

The parking and access road will be constructed with gravel blending the Park with the rural surroundings. Vegetated buffers will also be used to soften the proposed parking area and trailhead.

## 11 Light and Glare

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur?

The restroom building will have a single outdoor light for security. The restroom location is set back from Mosquito Lake Road and will not produce any off-site glare.

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

No

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

Do not know.

- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any:

Lighting limited to security lighting at the restroom. The building is located 200' south of Mosquito Lake Road, and the security light would be directed away from the roadway and adjacent property.

## 12 Recreation

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity?

Hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, ATV riding.

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe.

Illegal off-road vehicles and illegal hunting activity would be prohibited.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any:

The park development will enhance recreation opportunities. It will provide several miles of accessible trails, overlooks and natural and cultural interpretation.

### 13 Historic and Cultural Preservation

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

None at this time.

- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

Nesset Farm structures include a barn, tool sheds and residence. Other remnant structures also exist on the Overby and Galbraith Farms.

- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts, if any:

Nesset Farm buildings will be restored over a period of time. These buildings would be occasionally opened to guided interpretive walks.

### 14 Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

Highway 9 and Mosquito Lake Road. An improved access off of Mosquito Lake Road is proposed. See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information.

- b. Is site currently served by public transit? Yes  No

If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

WTA Flex route serves Van Zandt.

- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

30 parking spaces are proposed. No parking spaces currently exist on the site.

- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? Yes  No   
If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

An on-site access road will be constructed to access the proposed parking area and trailheads.

- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of)

- Water,  
 Rail, or  
 Air transportation?

If so, generally describe.

N/A

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

30 cars are expected on average per day. Peak volumes would occur between 8 AM and 4 PM. Seasonal variations will also occur with peak use during summer months and lowest use during winter months.

- g. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any:

None

## 15 Public Services

- a. Would the project result in an increased need for public services (for example: fire protection, police protection, health care, schools, other)?

Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information.

- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control direct impacts on public services, if any.

See Draft Environmental Assessment for more information.

## 16 Utilities

- a. Check utilities currently available at the site:

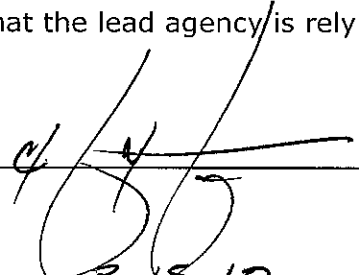
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electricity, | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural gas,    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water,                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse service, |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone,   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary sewer, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Septic system,          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other.          |

- b. Describe the utilities that are proposed for the project, the utility providing the service, and the general construction activities on the site or in the immediate vicinity which might be needed.

Electricity provided by Puget Sound Energy. A domestic well will be developed to provide water at the trailhead. A septic system will be constructed to service the proposed restroom building.

**SIGNATURE**

The above answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the lead agency is relying on them to make its decision.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: 3-15-10