



**MEMORANDUM**

December 22, 2015

File No. 15-090301

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Elizabeth L O'Neal, SEPA Center

SUBJECT: **SEPA LEAD AGENCY & MODIFIED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE**

This is to advise you that pursuant to WAC 197-11-900 (922 through 948), the Department of Natural Resources has determined that it is Lead Agency for the following:

**Goose Gap/Red Mountain Development Project: This proposal is to continue converting lands from historical grazing and dispersed ORV use to irrigated agriculture.**

- **Water rights changes to add additional acres of land to be used for irrigation.**
- **Issue new leases allowing for the development of up to 500 acres. DNR intends to conduct Public Auctions and issue leases allowing irrigation of the parcels. Some road construction, issuance of easements for development of new roads, attain access easements or other agreements to said lands across private property if needed, trenching for pipelines, and installation of irrigation equipment, power connections, plus some small construction projects for storage buildings are anticipated.**

**Description of Modification:** DNR's goal is that the remaining shrub-steppe will be higher quality than what is currently on-site. To accomplish this, we will be requiring the lessee to remove noxious weeds, as much as possible, and plant targeted areas with perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs. The objective of the targeted areas is to improve the quality of habitat they currently offer and provide corridors of shrub-steppe that will be retained during the conversion to irrigated agriculture. These areas will also receive less ORV disturbance than they currently experience. The purpose of providing corridors is to increase the capacity to facilitate movement of species through a matrix of native vegetation and irrigated agriculture. For example, corridors can provide cover and food for migrating birds. Designing this particular conversion as a matrix will sustain the overall landscape permeability.

**Located in: Sections 10, 14, 20 and 24, Township 09 North, Range 27 East, W.M., Benton County.**

Information about this proposal including the Threshold Determination, and SEPA Checklist can be accessed through DNR's website at:

<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sepa>

Pursuant to WAC 332-41-504, this proposal was filed in the department's SEPA Center at the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, P.O. Box 47015, Olympia, Washington, on **December 22, 2015**. We will consider comments on this proposed Modified Determination of Nonsignificance received by 4:30 p.m. on **January 05, 2016**. Comments should be submitted to the SEPA Center at, [sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov) or P.O. Box 47015, Olympia, Washington 98504-7015 for distribution to the responsible official. Please include the file number listed above on all comments.