

NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) AND AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLEMENTAL EA
FOR VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM -
YAKAMA NATION WILDLIFE RECREATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announces its intent to adopt the Farm Service Agency (FSA) FINAL PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ACCESS HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM YAKAMA NATION WILDLIFE RECREATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT, dated October 2011, according to the provisions of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 CFR 1506.3. Further, NRCS announces the availability of a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) to incorporate additional information that has become available since the 2011 EA.

The Yakama Nation applied for and received funding through the 2014 VPA-HIP. This grant is the second VPA-HIP grant awarded to the Yakama Nation and is intended to be used to continue implementation of the objectives set forth in the initial 2011 project proposal. The Yakama Nation's Wildlife, Range, and Vegetation Resources Management Program (WRVMP) proposes to use 2014 VPA-HIP grant funds over a three-year period to continue implementing the Wildlife Recreation Enhancement Project to 1) develop a non-consumptive recreation access permit system similar to that used for their Public Hunting Program, 2) enhance enrolled properties to facilitate non-consumptive use, 3) develop materials to guide non-consumptive use and, 4) monitor non-consumptive use. The key difference between the 2011 VPA-HIP grant activities and the 2014 VPA-HIP grant activities is that the Wildlife Viewing Plan that will guide implementation of activities to enhance non-consumptive uses and a wildlife viewing platform have now been completed. Additional mitigation measures have also been identified.

The 2011 EA as supplemented assesses the potential environmental effects of the VPA-HIP Wildlife Recreation Enhancement Project. NRCS anticipates that only minor, short-term adverse effects will occur during project implementation as a result of using VPA-HIP funds to install the enhancements described in the document. In the long-term, increased opportunities to Yakama people and the general public for appreciating wildlife and wetlands with minimal disturbance to protected resources and other benefits described in the 2011 Programmatic EA will be obtained.

The NRCS will accept comments on its intent to adopt the 2011 EA and the contents of its supplemental EA at the address below until May 18, 2015. A copy of the 2011 EA and the Supplement is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda/ea>. NRCS will review comments and determine whether it is appropriate to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact or to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement before the action proceeds.

For further information concerning actions being taken by the NRCS, to obtain a hard copy of the 2011 EA, or to provide written comment, contact the NRCS National Environmental Coordinator by email at andree.duvarney@wdc.usda.gov or by mail at:

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