

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

Governmental agencies use this checklist to help determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant. This information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal.

Instructions for applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Please answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. You may need to consult with an agency specialist or private consultant for some questions. You may use "not applicable" or "does not apply" only when you can explain why it does not apply and not when the answer is unknown. You may also attach or incorporate by reference additional studies reports. Complete and accurate answers to these questions often avoid delays with the SEPA process as well as later in the decision-making process.

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.

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

Please adjust the format of this template as needed. Additional information may be necessary to evaluate the existing environment, all interrelated aspects of the proposal and an analysis of adverse impacts. The checklist is considered the first but not necessarily the only source of information needed to make an adequate threshold determination. Once a threshold determination is made, the lead agency is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the checklist and other supporting documents.

Use of checklist for nonproject proposals:

For nonproject proposals (such as ordinances, regulations, plans and programs), complete the applicable parts of sections A and B plus the SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NONPROJECT ACTIONS (part D). Please completely answer all questions that apply and note that the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proponent," and "affected geographic area," respectively. The lead agency may exclude (for non-projects) questions in Part B - Environmental Elements –that do not contribute meaningfully to the analysis of the proposal.

A. Background [\[HELP\]](#)

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable: **Reecer Creek Instream Flow Transfer / S4-83608-J**
2. Name of applicant: **Kittitas County (Arden Thomas)**

3. Address and phone number of applicant and contact person:

Arden Thomas
411 North Ruby, Suite 1 Ellensburg, WA, 98926
509-962-7690

4. Date checklist prepared: 11/6/2024

5. Agency requesting checklist: Kittitas County and Kittitas County Water Conservancy Board

6. Proposed timing or schedule (including phasing, if applicable):

Instream flow transfer to be completed immediately upon final approval of transfer application.

7. Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? If yes, explain.

Yes. Once the water right transfer is complete and the water right is in the State's Trust Water Right Program (TWRP), the Applicant plans to make the water available through market re-allocation to mitigate out of priority water use. This water right could potentially be allocated to an existing Group A Water System through the Kittitas County bank, but this option is dependent on securing funding for that use.

This application and associated SEPA checklist will only evaluate the instream flow transfer because the proposed transfer is above 1 cfs and therefore is subject to SEPA. However, the subsequent water right permitting will involve groundwater withdrawals less than 2,250 gpm and thus is SEPA exempt (WAC 197-11-800).

8. List any environmental information you know about that has been prepared, or will be prepared, directly related to this proposal.

The Water Right Change Application and the Draft Report of Examination have been completed and include limited environmental information regarding this proposal. These will be reviewed by the Kittitas County Water Conservancy Board (Board) and Ecology during the water right change process.

9. Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? If yes, explain.

No pending proposals.

10. List any government approvals or permits that will be needed for your proposal, if known.

The associated Change Report of Examination will need to be approved by the Board. Once approved by the Board, Ecology will review the approval and either modify, deny or approve the proposal.

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.)

The applicant is proposing to complete a water right change on S4-83608-J. The proposed change would (1) fallow up to 56 acres and (2) transfer the consumptive use portion of the water right to instream flow and mitigation for enrollment in the State's Trust Water Right Program (TWRP).

Once the water right is in the TWRP, the Applicant will make the water available through market re-allocation to mitigate out of priority water use. This water right could be allocated through the County's existing mitigation bank or potentially be allocated to an existing Group A Water System through the Kittitas County bank.

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.

The legal description of the Place of Use of the Water Right is as follows:

The portion of the SW¼SE¼ of Section 28, T. 18 N., R. 18 E.W.M. lying southwesterly of the Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way, and that portion of the NW¼SE¼ of said section describes as follows: Commencing at the southwest corner of said NW¼ SE¼; thence east 300 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning; thence east 850 feet, more or less, to the Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way; thence northwesterly 1,030 feet, more or less, along said right-of-way; thence southwesterly 720 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning; and that portion of the SE¼SW¼ of said section lying east of Desmond Rd.

Under the proposed change, the instream flow place of use would include the following reaches:

Primary Reach: Begins at the authorized point of withdrawal on Reecer Creek which is where the Creek Crosses Dry Creek Road (NE¼SE¼NE¼ of Section 28, Township 18 North, Range 18 East Willamette Meridian) and extends down to the point where return flows reach the creek.

The Secondary Reach begins approximately at a point located 1,390 feet south and 860 feet west from the northeast corner of Section 33 (within the SE¼NE¼ of Section 33, T. 18 N., R. 18 E.W.M.), and extends downstream to the confluence with the Yakima River, and continues

downstream in the Yakima River to the Yakima Canyon within Kittitas County at river mile 127 within the SE¼NW¼ of Section 33, T. 15 N., R. 19 E.W.M.

See attached map for location details.

B. Environmental Elements [\[HELP\]](#)

1. Earth [\[help\]](#)

- a. General description of the site:

The site can be described as: Reecer Creek from where the Creek Crosses Dry Creek Road (NE¼SE¼NE¼ of Section 28, Township 18 North, Range 18 East Willamette Meridian) to the confluence with the Yakima River. (Flat)

(circle one): **Flat**, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other _____

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

There is no significant impact to earthen features in water right transfer projects, particularly instream flow-only proposals. Accordingly, information sought under most of the following questions is not applicable.

- 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 agricultural land of long-term commercial significance and whether the proposal results in removing any of these soils. **N/A**
- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe. **N/A**
- e. Describe the purpose, type, total area, and approximate quantities and total affected area of any filling, excavation, and grading proposed. Indicate source of fill. **N/A**
- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe. **N/A**
- g. About what percent of the site will be covered with impervious surfaces after project construction (for example, asphalt or buildings)? **N/A**
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control erosion, or other impacts to the earth, if any: **N/A**

2. Air [\[help\]](#)

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal during construction, operation, and maintenance when the project is completed? If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

There is no significant impact to air or air quality under water right transfer projects.

b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal? If so, generally describe. **N/A**

c. Proposed measures to reduce or control emissions or other impacts to air, if any: **N/A**

3. Water [\[help\]](#)

a. Surface Water: [\[help\]](#)

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

Yes. The primary reach of the proposed transfer is Reecer Creek, a tributary to the Yakima River.

- 2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

Historically water has been diverted from Reecer Creek to irrigate farmland associated with water right S4-83608-J. The project proposed to stop the diversion associated with water right S4-83608-J which would increase the flows in Reecer Creek downstream of the diversion during the irrigation season, April 1 to October 15.

- 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. **None.**

- 4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No. Under the proposed transfer water will be added to Reecer Creek during the irrigation season, April 1 to October 15.

- 5) Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? If so, note location on the site plan.

Yes. The proposed instream flow transfer is within the stream channel and thus within the floodplain.

- 6) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge. **No.**

b. Ground Water: [\[help\]](#)

- 1) Will groundwater be withdrawn from a well for drinking water or other purposes? If so, give a general description of the well, proposed uses and approximate quantities

withdrawn from the well. Will water be discharged to groundwater? Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No groundwater withdrawals will occur under the "project" contemplated by the application.

However, future groundwater withdrawals may occur from wells in hydraulic continuity with Reecer Creek and or the mainstem Yakima River. Subsequential groundwater withdrawals would either be less than 2,250 gpm and thus SEPA exempt, or would undergo separate SEPA analysis. Potential impacts associated with any subsequential groundwater withdrawals exceeding the permit-exemption threshold will be assessed by Ecology during the water right permitting process.

2) 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. **N/A**

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). Where will this water flow? Will this water flow into other waters? If so, describe. **N/A**

2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters? If so, generally describe. **N/A**

3) Does the proposal alter or otherwise affect drainage patterns in the vicinity of the site? If so, describe. **N/A**

d. Proposed measures to reduce or control surface, ground, and runoff water, and drainage pattern impacts, if any: **N/A**

4. **Plants** [\[help\]](#)

a. Check the types of vegetation found on the site:

Many types of these plants exist throughout the project area (defined as the lands in the vicinity of the primary and secondary instream flow reach, and the lands where water was applied under the water right). Specific to lands where the water was applied under the water right, the vegetation was irrigated pasture.

___ **deciduous tree:** alder, maple, aspen, cottonwood other

___ **evergreen tree:** fir, cedar, pine, other

___ **shrubs:** willow, red-oiser dogwood, rose, snowberry

- ___ grass
- ___ **pasture**
- ___ crop or grain
- ___ Orchards, vineyards or other permanent crops.
- ___ 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? **N/A**

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

There are no known threatened or endangered plant species known to be on or near the project site.

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

e. List all noxious weeds and invasive species known to be on or near the site.

To the applicants knowledge, none.

5. **Animals** [\[help\]](#)

a. List any birds and other animals which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site. (See **bolded items below** for animals that may occur in the instream flow reaches)

Examples include:

birds: **hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds**, other:

mammals: **deer, bear, elk, beaver**, other:

fish: **bass, salmon, trout**, herring, shellfish, other _____

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

ESA-listed Mid-Columbia River (MCR) summer steelhead and bull trout are present within the Yakima River. Summer steelhead are also present within Reecer Creek. Bull trout may occur within the Yakima River but are unlikely to occur within Reecer Creek due unsuitable habitat conditions. The Yakima River is designated at critical habitat for bull trout and MCR steelhead. Lower Reecer Creek is designated critical habitat for MCR steelhead.

c. Is the site part of a migration route? If so, explain.

Yes, project will enhance streamflows in Reecer Creek and Yakima River from the historic point of diversion downstream to the confluence with the Columbia River. Salmonids, bull trout, and other fish species use these waterways for migration. Migratory birds, like waterfowl, also use the Yakima River corridor.

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

There are no specific wildlife enhancement measures under the specific application however, enhanced instream flows will contribute positively to stream flow, and aquatic habitat in Reecer Creek and the Yakima River.

e. List any invasive animal species known to be on or near the site.

To the applicants knowledge, none.

6. Energy and Natural Resources [\[help\]](#)

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. **N/A**

b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties? If so, generally describe. **N/A**

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: **N/A**

7. Environmental Health [\[help\]](#)

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? If so, describe. **None.**

1) Describe any known or possible contamination at the site from present or past uses.

To the applicant's knowledge, none.

2) Describe existing hazardous chemicals/conditions that might affect project development and design. This includes underground hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines located within the project area and in the vicinity.

To the applicant's knowledge, none.

- 3) Describe any toxic or hazardous chemicals that might be stored, used, or produced during the project's development or construction, or at any time during the operating life of the project. **N/A**
- 4) Describe special emergency services that might be required. **N/A**
- 5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any: **N/A**

b. Noise

- 1) What types of noise exist in the area which may affect your project (for example: traffic, equipment, operation, other)? **N/A**
- 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. **N/A**
- 3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any: **N/A**

8. Land and Shoreline Use [\[help\]](#)

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

Under the application, land adjacent to the instream flow primary reach is exclusively irrigated agriculture. Downstream, lands adjacent to the secondary reach are defined by natural habitat; farms; roads and railroads; and residential industrial and recreational areas.

The "project" under the Application – instream flow enhancement – will not adversely affect adjacent properties or environmental values.

- b. Has the project site been used as working farmlands or working forest lands? If so, describe. How much agricultural or forest land of long-term commercial significance will be converted to other uses as a result of the proposal, if any? If resource lands have not been designated, how many acres in farmland or forest land tax status will be converted to nonfarm or nanoforest use?

Lands immediately adjacent to the instream flow primary reach under the Application are zoned agriculture and actively farmed. To Applicant's knowledge, such lands are not considered as agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance.

Under the proposed change irrigation will cease on 43.65 acres. This site is zoned Light Industrial.

- 1) Will the proposal affect or be affected by surrounding working farm or forest land normal business operations, such as oversize equipment access, the application of pesticides, tilling, and harvesting? If so, how:

This project does not impact the activities of surrounding working farm or normal business operations.

c. Describe any structures on the site. **N/A**

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what? **N/A**

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

Appurtenant Lands (Parcel Nos. 961885 and 961884): Light Industrial

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

Appurtenant Lands (Parcel Nos. 961885 and 961884): Light Industrial

Primary Reach: Rural Residential Land Use

Secondary Reach (to the Yakima River): Urban Land Use

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

Reecer Creek is not designated shoreline. There are a number of different Yakima River shoreline designations, including Rural Conservancy, Urban Conservancy, and Aquatic.

h. Has any part of the site been classified as a critical area by the city or county? If so, specify.

The appurtenant lands and benefiting reaches include Critical Aquifer Recharge Area, Fish and Wildlife Recovery Area, Frequently flooded areas and wetlands. Increased instream flows would provide positive benefits for most of these. Additional information for the Kittitas County Critical Area planning with respect to Reecer Creek can be found here:

https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/uploads/documents/cds/cao/documents/20140618-meeting/kittitas-bas-report-final_june2014.pdf

i. Approximately how many people would reside or work in the completed project? **N/A**

j. Approximately how many people would the completed project displace? **N/A**

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: **N/A**

m. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts to agricultural and forest lands of long-term commercial significance, if any: **N/A**

9. Housing [\[help\]](#)

- a. Approximately how many units would be provided, if any? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. **N/A**
- b. Approximately how many units, if any, would be eliminated? Indicate whether high, middle, or low-income housing. **N/A**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control housing impacts, if any: **N/A**

10. Aesthetics [\[help\]](#)

- a. What is the tallest height of any proposed structure(s), not including antennas; what is the principal exterior building material(s) proposed? **N/A**
- b. What views in the immediate vicinity would be altered or obstructed? **N/A**
- b. Proposed measures to reduce or control aesthetic impacts, if any: **N/A**

11. Light and Glare [\[help\]](#)

- a. What type of light or glare will the proposal produce? What time of day would it mainly occur? **N/A**
- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views? **N/A**
- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal? **N/A**
- d. Proposed measures to reduce or control light and glare impacts, if any: **N/A**

12. Recreation [\[help\]](#)

- a. What designated and informal recreational opportunities are in the immediate vicinity? **N/A**

- b. Would the proposed project displace any existing recreational uses? If so, describe. **N/A**
- c. Proposed measures to reduce or control impacts on recreation, including recreation opportunities to be provided by the project or applicant, if any: **N/A**

13. Historic and cultural preservation [\[help\]](#)

- a. Are there any buildings, structures, or sites, located on or near the site that are over 45 years old listed in or eligible for listing in national, state, or local preservation registers ? If so, specifically describe. **N/A**
- b. Are there any landmarks, features, or other evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation? This may include human burials or old cemeteries. Are there any material evidence, artifacts, or areas of cultural importance on or near the site? Please list any professional studies conducted at the site to identify such resources. **N/A**
- c. Describe the methods used to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project site. Examples include consultation with tribes and the department of archeology and historic preservation, archaeological surveys, historic maps, GIS data, etc. **N/A**
- d. Proposed measures to avoid, minimize, or compensate for loss, changes to, and disturbance to resources. Please include plans for the above and any permits that may be required. **N/A**

14. Transportation [\[help\]](#)

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site or affected geographic area and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any. **N/A**
- b. Is the site or affected geographic area currently served by public transit? If so, generally describe. If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop? **N/A**
- c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate? **N/A**
- d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private). **N/A**

- e. Will the project or proposal 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 or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and nonpassenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates? **N/A**
- g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe. **N/A**
- h. Proposed measures to reduce or control transportation impacts, if any: **N/A**

15. Public Services [\[help\]](#)

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

The "project" as defined under the application will not increase the need for any additional public services.

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

16. Utilities [\[help\]](#)

- a. Circle utilities currently available at the site:
electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system,
other _____ **N/A**
- c. 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. **N/A**

C. Signature [\[HELP\]](#)

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: 

Name of signee Arden Thomas

Position and Agency/Organization Water Reserve Manager - Killebuck County

Date Submitted: 11-6-2024