



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division

King Street Center
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 5702
Seattle, WA 98104
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/parks>

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

A. Background

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Island Center Forest
Bypass Thin

2. Name of applicant:

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

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

Paul Fischer, Senior Forester
King County Parks and Recreation Division
201 South Jackson Street, Room 5702
Seattle, WA 98104
206-477-7372 (SEPA)
KCParks.SEPA@kingcounty.gov

4. Date checklist prepared:

April 29, 2024

5. Agency requesting checklist:

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

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

Timing for this project is for an estimated up to 8-week period between June and December of 2024. All trail and road closures will occur only during active operations.

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

No further actions will take place related to this proposal. Generally, Island Center Forest is one of King County's "Working Forests" described in the 2022 King County Open Space Plan Update and *Island Center Forest Site Management Guidelines*, where timber production is added to the County's suite of climate-, ecological- and public use-oriented objectives. Similar forestry projects are likely to take place elsewhere in Island Center Forest in the future. These potential projects have not been scoped and would be unrelated to this forestry project and would receive a separate SEPA review.

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

This information is available for review on the King County website at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/parks/publicnotices>

[Island Center Forest Site Management Guidelines](#) (April 2006, King County Parks)

[Island Center Forest Site Management Guidelines Update](#) (November 2017, Stewardship Forestry and Science)

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.

There are no other known applications in this area.

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

Washington (WA) Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Practices Application

11. Give a 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.)

Island Center Forest is a Forest Stewardship Council® (license code FSC-C008225) certified working forest demonstrating how environmentally sound forest management protects and restores ecological systems while providing recreational opportunities.

The Island Center Bypass Thinning Project is comprised of 45.4 acres of commercial thinning with replanting aimed at improving stand structure and composition. The main objectives for these treatments are: promoting the development of complex forest structures by diversifying stand density structure; preventing mortality and accelerating growth rates of existing understory and midstory shade tolerant tree species by allowing for establishment of a new, patchy cohort of understory trees; minimizing the spread of laminated root rot throughout the forest and replanting

with less-susceptible species; minimizing damage to trails, roads, and soils; and capturing the merchantable value of trees before the decline of alder and root rot Douglas fir, to support forest stewardship in line with the property's working forest designation defined in King County's Comprehensive Plan (2022). The treatments will shift the ecosystem from over-stocked Douglas fir stands – and, in Unit E, alder-dense stands – to more diverse and drought-resistant coniferous stands. The stands will still have components of the former stand, such as bigleaf maple and red alder in Unit E and large Douglas firs in the other units, but will begin to shift toward more resilient, uneven-aged Douglas fir with other native conifers. Unit A covers 12.9 acres of mostly Douglas fir including a large root rot area. Unit B1 Central covers 5.6 acres of heavily infested, larger diameter Douglas fir, with large root rot openings in B1 West (2.0 acres – to be cut by island local loggers for local mills). Unit C (7.7 acres) and the Cemetery Unit (8.1 acres) both contain smaller-diameter, densely-populated Douglas fir. Unit E1 (2.6 acres), E2 (3.4 acres), and E3 (3.1 acres) contain mostly declining alders. East of the Land Trust trail, four small red alder gap units totaling 4.7 acres will also be cut, with all trees left on-site.

Island Center Forest is also one of King County's "Working Forests" described in the 2022 *King County Open Space Plan Update* and *Island Center Forest Site Management Guidelines*. In working forests, timber production is added to the County's suite of climate-, ecological- and public use-oriented objectives. This working forest status further motivates a commercial forestry project to achieve the climate resilience objectives.

The County proposes using logging equipment such as feller-bunchers, tracked or wheeled skidders, processors, log loaders, forwarders, shovel yarding, or other similar mechanized methods of tree cutting to remove root rot-infested Douglas fir up to 24" diameter at breast height (DBH). Western redcedar and any other root rot-resistant species would be retained. Most red alder over 8" DBH in E units would be removed. All other species would be retained. Large trees will be retained for wildlife and habitat purposes. The cut trees would be sold for lumber, chips, pulp, veneer, firewood, or other uses as markets allow. Stumps typically would remain in place and will not be grubbed or pulled. Depending on severity of root rot in the other units, some stumps may be pulled to deter further spread to healthy trees.

No permanent new roads are proposed; however, one new graveled truck turn-around will be constructed and left in place after the project, and the 115th trail will undergo upgrades that will change the nature of its current condition from a two-track pathway to a larger truck-accessible route. Otherwise, existing permanent roads will be suitable for this project, though they would need to be widened through the cutting of trees to at least ten feet and resurfaced with additional gravel. One temporary road of 400 linear feet total will be constructed along the 188th bypass trail footprint following WA DNR Forest Practices standards (Title 222 WAC) and will be removed after the project is complete. These roads would be natural surface from the underlying glacial till soil, with spot rock, temporary culverts, water bars, and other drainage features added if needed.

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.

- Unit A: T23 R02 S36 SE; parcel 3623029013
- Unit B1 Central/West: T23 R03 S31 SW; parcel 3123039023
- Cemetery: T23 R03 S31 SW; parcel 3123039023
- Unit C: T23 R03 S31 NW; parcels 3123039019, 3123039162
- Unit E (1, 2, 3): Portions of T23 R02 S36 SE and T23 R03 S31 NW; parcels 3123039162, 3623029013
- Alder Gaps (1, 2, 3, 4): T23 R03 S31; parcel 3123039019

The project site includes five units and four alder gap cuts in eastern Island Center Forest. Island Center Forest is owned by King County Parks and is located just west of the town of Vashon, on Vashon Island. The site can be accessed from SW Bank Road by turning south onto 115th Ave SW and continuing to a small parking area. It can also be accessed from SW Cemetery Rd by turning north onto 115th Ave SW and parking in a small parking area at a gate. Units C and E are accessible from 115th Ave SW prior to reaching the parking area, and the alder gap cuts are accessible from the parking area. To reach the remaining units, continue through the locked gates on either end of 115th Ave SW. Cemetery unit is immediately to the east of the locked gate on the south side of the forest. Unit A begins approximately 500 feet south of the gate on the north side of the forest. Units A and E are split by this road/trail (115th Ave Bypass), with Unit E to the east. Units B1 Central and B1 West are located approximately 2000 feet past the north gate, south of the 188th trail and across from the southern border of Unit E.

B. Environmental Elements

1. Earth

- a. General description of the site:** All units in the project are forested areas bounded by singletrack trails and old access roads. The forests are populated with second- and third-growth Douglas fir in all but Unit E and the gap cuts, which are populated with third-growth red alder that is in age-related decline. No understory tree regeneration is taking place due to crowding and laminated root rot. Shrubs and forbs include sword fern, salal, Oregon grape, and other native species. Invasive plants are uncommon but include Himalayan blackberry, English holly, tansy ragwort, and English laurel.

Circle or highlight one: Flat, rolling, hilly, steep slopes, mountainous, other:

- b. What is the steepest slope on the site (approximate percent slope)? 20%**
- 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.**

This site is completely encompassed by Alderwood gravelly sandy loam. These soils are moderately deep, 2 to 3 feet, and moderately well-drained with no ponding potential. Compaction potential and resistance are both moderate throughout the site, with very low erosion potential. The site index is 111, which is a site class III. Vulnerability to drought is high and there is a high likelihood of plant competition following harvest. No soil will be removed from the site.

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? If so, describe.**

No indications or history of unstable soils are known in the immediate vicinity of the proposed harvest areas. Existing King County landslide mapping does not show mass wasting activity near the proposed harvest areas. Careful field verification when scoping this project included assessment for features associated with landslides, following Section 16 of the *WA DNR Forest Practices Board Manual* standards. Features such as headwalls, gorges, trees with “pistol butt” growth form, etc. that indicate unstable soils were not found.

- 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.**

A truck turnaround will be developed along 115th Bypass road at the corner where it meets the 188th trail. This involves widening the existing road to 15 feet for approximately 50 linear feet to cover approximately 750 square feet, creating a Y-turnaround that includes the current road footprint. Surfacing gravel will be purchased from King County approved off-site commercial gravel sources.

Approximately 400 linear feet of temporary road will be constructed and then removed through soil ripping and replanting with native vegetation.

Maintenance of existing forest roads will take place including surface grading, brushing, spot rock, and drainage maintenance.

- f. Could erosion occur because of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.**

Some minor erosion could occur on some areas of the project area. Logging equipment can cause ruts and soil compaction that increase the risk of erosion. Slopes are generally 20% grade or less. Since the area is heavily vegetated with shrubs and ground plants, no root grubbing occurs, and road maintenance best management practices such as water bars, appropriate drainage structures (typically culverts), and crowning and grading angles that promote drainage will be used, the risk of erosion will be minor. Logging operations are designed to avoid uphill yarding. Yarding corridors will follow low-angle routes along slopes, and use of more, smaller landings will reduce the compaction and erosion risk of logging. Logging will be suspended on days where operations would

cause damage to water quality, road systems or soils during wet weather.

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

Less than 2% of the site, which includes gravel roads, will be covered with impervious surface after project construction. Permanent roads are pre-existing gravel-surfaced and compacted and function as impervious surface. The only new increase in impervious surface will be about 1/10th of an acre of road widening to allow for log truck turn-around. 400 linear feet of temporary road will be constructed and then removed through soil ripping and replanting with native vegetation.

Hiking trails in and near the project area will be naturally surfaced with native mineral soil and rock. If necessary, some trail surfaces may be hardened with gravel and other various sizes of native on-site rock.

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

Low-impact yarding methods will be used whenever feasible to minimize impacts. Shovel yarding (using tracked equipment to grapple logs and swing them through the air, pile by pile) or a forwarder (rubber-tire or tracked equipment that cuts, bucks, and transports logs in the woods) will be specified in contract documents as the preferred approach, over skidding, which involves tracked or rubber tire equipment dragging logs over the ground. Slash will be spread out over yarding corridors to reduce soil disruption and compaction. Standard best management practices will be used on logging roads such as water bars or drivable berms and dips. Logging operational layout is designed to avoid steep slopes, yarding on side slopes, minimize temporary roads, and other factors that lead to soil compaction and erosion.

Permanent existing roads will be maintained to the *King County Road Design and Construction Standards for Unincorporated King County* and according to WAC 222-24 Road Construction and Maintenance and *WA DNR's Forest Practices Board Manual Chapter 3 - Guidelines for Forest Roads*.

Temporary roads would be natural surface from the underlying glacial till soil, with spot rock, temporary culverts, water bars, and other drainage features utilized as needed. Temporary road construction will also follow WAC 222-24 Road Construction and Maintenance, and *WA DNR's Forest Practices Board Manual Chapter 3 - Guidelines for Forest Roads*. "Removal" of the temporary roads follows WAC 22-24-052 requirements for "Abandonment." The temporary road on 188th Trail will go beyond these stands to facilitate replanting the temporary road grades. Examples include roughing the top six to twelve inches of compacted soil with an excavator or log loader or similar equipment, adding water bars or other features to prevent surface water flow, followed by replanting with native trees in the next planting season. King County would block access to the removed roadbed with soil berms or trenches, logs, rocks, or other physical barriers.

2. Air

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.

Diesel vehicle and machine exhaust will be emitted during the operations of cutting timber on site. Feller-bunchers, skidders, shovel yarders, forwarders, processors, and loaders may be used. Emissions include carbon monoxide and dioxide, reactive organic gasses, and nitrogen oxide. Airborne dust particles and sawdust may result from harvesting activities.

In the short-term, removing a percentage of the tree canopy will result in a net loss of carbon sequestration, even when accounting for carbon stored in long-lived wood products. The remaining conifers will eventually exceed the carbon sequestration potential of the current forest around 30 years after the project takes place, based on internal King County Parks forest growth modeling assessments. In very long timeframes (50 to 100+ years), the large long-lived conifers will greatly increase carbon sequestration, even accounting for future forestry thinning harvests that are likely to take place.

Maintenance-related emissions include heavy equipment maintaining roads and periodic visits in pickup truck or similar vehicles for monitoring and forest health assessments.

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

Offsite emissions will come from diesel trucks used to transport cut and processed logs to the mill. Mills typically burn unusable wood residues of the sawmill process in high-efficiency biomass generators to power milling operations. This will not affect the proposal.

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

Equipment operators will be encouraged to limit time with the machines idling.

3. Water

a. Surface Water:

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.

The project area is just over 200 feet from the following hydrologic resources, as defined by WA DNR Forest Practices Rules (WAC Sections 222-16-030 through 222-16-036):

- Stream Segment 1: Headwaters of Judd Creek, seasonal non-fish bearing – WA DNR Type Ns.
 - Located outside of project units and just beyond 200 feet of Unit A (approximately 205 feet at closest point)

The project area is located within Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 9 Green-Duwamish. Waterways from the project site flow into Judd Creek, which eventually flows to the Puget Sound.

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.

No. If any unknown waters are discovered, the project will observe all WA DNR Forest Practices regulations for riparian management zones (RMZs) and wetland management zones (WMZs). See the attached Island Center Forest Bypass Thin Waterbodies map.

- 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 a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No.

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

No.

- 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:

- 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 a general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.**

No.

- 2) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (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.**

None.

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.**

The primary sources of runoff will be from precipitation. Storm water runoff could collect and flow along two features in the project area yarding corridors and logging roads. Runoff abatement measures will prevent surface water from flowing into adjacent water bodies:

- a) Yarding corridors created by the logging operations. This project site has mostly gentle to moderate slopes (typically around 20% grade or less) and is well-vegetated. Storm water surface flow will dissipate in the adjacent vegetation and not enter other waters. Logging slash (cut tops and branches not suitable for forest product markets) will be re-distributed over the yarding corridors with soil disturbance to effectively mulch the trails to further reduce the risk of surface water flow.
- b) Logging roads. Logging roads are built to WA DNR and King County specification to minimize surface water flow and avoid discharge into other waters. Appropriate crowning and grading angles, water bars, and drainage culverts will be installed to meet WA DNR Forest Practices best management practices standards.

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

Fuel, oil, coolant, solvent, or hydraulic fluid are all waste materials that could potentially enter the ground or surface waters during work on this project due to equipment breakdowns in logging machines. The logging contract will require a Washington Department of Ecology (WA DOE) Spill Kit on site at all times. All spills will be cleaned up including removal of contaminated soil. Large quantities of bulk fuel/other hazardous materials will not be stored on site. Any release of oil or hazardous materials to the environment will be reported to the WA DOE.

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

The project will increase the amount of rain reaching the ground surface and percolating into the soil profile. Tree removal projects increase the amount of rainwater that reaches the soil due to fewer trees encountering and physically retaining rain on leaves and branches. Also, tree removals will increase water in the soil profile due to the loss of trees that draw water from the soil and transpire the moisture into the air. Existing drainage patterns may experience increased flow. The site will remain heavily vegetated with existing shrubs and forbs, reducing the risk of surface water flow. Newly planted trees following tree removal will eventually resume rainfall interception and transpiration as they grow tall and increase foliar surface area.

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

Best management practices such as water bars and drivable berms will be installed on roads and yarding corridors anywhere surface water flow is likely to take place or had been observed taking place.

4. Plants

a. Check the 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
- 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?

Approximately 508 thousand board feet (mbf) of Douglas fir timber and 17 mbf of red alder timber and pulp will be removed from the site. That is equivalent to around 110 loaded log trucks. Logs will be processed on site; slash will be scattered across yarding corridors (not piled). No other species of trees are to be cut unless required for road maintenance, temporary roads, yarding corridors or landings.

Some of the understory shrubs and forbs will be damaged in the project area due to the movement of logging equipment. Species typically found on site include sword fern, vine maple, evergreen huckleberry, salal, Oregon grape, trailing blackberry, and other native species. These shrubs and forbs will rapidly regrow after operations have been completed due to resilient root stocks. Areas of shrubs and forbs will be intentionally cleared to create space for temporary roads and landing for logs and equipment at four to six landings, totaling approximately one to three acres within the project area footprint. Landings will be replanted with mixed native tree species and are expected to re-vegetate with native understory plants naturally.

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

The [Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program database](#) was checked on 1/25/2024 and did not indicate any threatened or endangered species on or near the project site. If observed during construction, King County will seek biologist guidance on proper project buffering and/or required protective measures. No other threatened or endangered species are known to occur on or near the site.

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

The project will include the retention of approximately 50% of the existing stands in the conifer thinning units. In Unit E, all declining red alders will be removed. All other tree species will be retained, unless removal is unavoidable for operational needs such as road maintenance, temporary roads, yarding corridors or landings. The project area where root rot exists will be interplanted with native root rot-resistant conifer species. Areas that have less than 20% canopy closure after harvest will be replanted at 300 to 400 trees per acre using native tree species. Partially

shaded areas may have lower densities of planted trees. Unit E will be planted with 300-400 trees per acre (TPA). All areas of the project will meet WA DNR retention and reproduction requirements.

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

Noxious weeds:

- Tansy ragwort – isolated patches. Regulated Class B.
- Shiny geranium – isolated patches. Regulated Class B.
- Scotch broom – isolated patches. Non-regulated Class B.

Invasive weeds:

- Common holly – widespread individual plants. Non-regulated weed of concern.
- Himalayan blackberry – patches near forest edges. Non-regulated, Class C.
- Foxglove – individual plants in canopy openings. Non-regulated weed of concern.
- Evergreen blackberry – patches near forest edges. Non-regulated, Class C.
- English hawthorn – individual plants. Non-regulated, Class C.

5. Animals

a. List any birds and other animals that have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site. Examples include:

- **Birds: hawk, heron, eagle, songbirds, other:** Heron, eagle, songbird, barred owl, pygmy owl, common raptor, northern goshawk, redtail hawk, woodpecker, common game birds, neotropical migratory waterfowl, crow, and others.
- **Mammals: deer, bear, elk, beaver, other:** Columbia black-tailed deer, rodents, bobcat, coyote, cougar, black bear, raccoon, bat, shrew, vole, beaver, mountain beaver, and others.
- **Fish: bass, salmon, trout, herring, shellfish, other:** Puget Sound fish and shellfish.
- **Reptiles/Amphibians:** Pacific tree frog, Pacific giant salamander, Cope's giant salamander, other common toads, frogs, turtles, and salamanders, garter snake, skink, and others.

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

A January 2024 search of the [WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Web Tool](#) was conducted. Judd Creek and its fish-bearing tributaries may host the following priority habitat species: coho salmon, chinook salmon (Puget Sound population), and steelhead (Puget Sound population). Two of those species have state or federal status: chinook salmon (federally Threatened) and steelhead (federally Threatened). No other threatened or endangered species are known to occur on or near the site.

The headwaters of Judd Creek, while not within 200 feet of the project area, do not meet DNR forest practices criteria for a fish-bearing stream at its origin, and will be classified as a non-fish bearing stream during the FPA permitting process.

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

The project site is located within the Pacific Flyway, which is a major north-south route of travel for migratory birds in America, extending from Alaska to Patagonia. Migrating and nesting birds within the project area will be protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

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

King County's *Island Center Forest Site Management Guidelines* provides guidance for this proposal, protecting, enhancing, and restoring ecological systems and restoration of forest health and diversity, while providing passive recreation opportunities for the public.

This project is designed to improve wildlife habitat over the long timeframes that are necessary for forest development and maturation. Tree selection criteria will retain large individual trees that provide the greatest habitat elements in the near-term. Adjacent areas that are suitable for harvest have been excluded from the project area to provide refuges for wildlife that depend on the current forest conditions. Appropriate biologist guidance on proper project buffering and/or required protective measures, or area avoidance, will be followed during project implementation. There will be no herbicide usage on invasives when flowers or fruit are present.

Across the landscape of Island Center Forest and surrounding ownership, this project increases habitat diversity and habitat quality over very long timeframes relevant to forest development and climate change.

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

Invasive animal species known to inhabit areas within or near the project area include starlings, house sparrows, eastern gray squirrel, Eurasian collared-dove, barred owl, and bullfrogs which are found throughout the lowlands of western Washington.

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.

Diesel and gasoline fuels will be used during the operations of this project. This energy will be used to power machines and vehicle used to cut, process, and transport the removed timber.

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

No. Changes in light or shade due to tree removal or growth will not reach property boundaries.

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.

None.

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 because of this proposal? If so, describe.

The Department of Ecology [Dirt Alert map](#) shows the harvest area is within the 40.1-100 ppm arsenic area of the Tacoma Smelter Plume, a 1000-square-mile area of arsenic, lead, and other heavy metal contamination from the smokestacks of the former Asarco smelter in Tacoma. Harvest methods used will minimize soil disturbance and dust production.

Fire is a potential risk depending on the season in which logging operations will be conducted. Fall, winter, and spring logging will maintain low fire risk, while summer may pose a higher fire risk. The logging operations will be required to adhere to all requirements of WA DNR's Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL) such as firefighting hand tools and fire extinguishers in every vehicle; water tank, pump, and hoses on-site; a person dedicated to watching for signs of fire after work ceases each day; and operating time limitations to stop work in the hot afternoons or prohibit work entirely. WA DNR closely monitors fire risk including humidity and wind and issues daily limitations on logging operations as needed to reduce the risk of fire through IFPL. IFPL is the regional standard for wildfire risk reduction in forestry operations.

Should a fire start, King County emergency response systems and WA DNR wildfire crews would respond. The project area has cell phone coverage and good road access to facilitate a rapid response to wildfire.

Loggers will be required to scatter slash on site. This increase in small-diameter dead wood will increase the fuel load for an estimated one to three years above current conditions. After that time, the wood will have decomposed enough and be settled close enough to ground level to maintain high moisture content to not increase fuel loads above current conditions.

There is also potential for fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, or other fluid leaks from the machines and equipment used for the logging operations.

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

The [DOE Confirmed and Contaminated Sites table](#) shows no confirmed or suspected contaminated sites in the project area. However, the harvest area is within the Tacoma Smelter Plume with 40.1-100 ppm levels of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals, according to the DOE [Dirt Alert map](#).

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.

No known hazardous chemicals or conditions exist on site.

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.

Diesel fuel, gasoline, oil, hydraulic fluid, grease, and other fluids used to maintain and operate power equipment will be kept on site during logging operations. Equipment will produce temporary emissions during construction phase of the project. IFPL requirements and WDFW HPA rules/regulations will be followed to ensure safe fuel storage and acceptable re-fueling locations that will protect resources.

4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

Fire or emergency medical response may be required if an accident occurs during project implementation. Any oil or fuel spills discovered from equipment or vehicles will be appropriately cleaned and/or removed immediately, and DOE notified if necessary. Wildland fire response may be required should a fire break out on site.

5) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any.

Careful equipment fuel storage in spill proof containers will be utilized during project implementation. Machine operators are required to have proper training to operate equipment safely. Machines will be regularly inspected for leaks. Spill response kits will be present for each vehicle on site to start the cleanup process as soon as possible after a detected leak or spill. If contamination of the environment is suspected, King County is required to contact the Department of Ecology to determine the necessary cleanup actions, if any, depending on the content and severity of the spill. Fire response equipment will also be present on site, and any IFPL rules for the area will be observed.

b. Noise

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

There is very limited anthropogenic noise on this site. Occasional traffic can be heard from the main road or from airplanes flying overhead. Vehicle noise may be more frequent during the spring, summer, and autumn when weather is more favorable for driving. There is occasional noise from motorized equipment produced by King County Parks employees doing trail maintenance.

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)?

There is no expected long-term noise associated with this project. The remote location of the project will limit overall impact of the noise produced. Short-term noise will be from the operation of diesel machinery, log trucks, and vehicles. The cutting and dropping of trees will also produce

noise. Offsite noise will come from diesel trucks transporting timber from the site along public roads. Noise from log trucks on 115th Ave SW could occur in the pre-dawn hours, with 3 to 5 log trucks traveling the road per day. Certain forestry activities, including those proposed in this SEPA checklist, are exempt from King County Noise Ordinance, Title 12, when the areas receiving the noise are designated residential areas (RA or R zoning) described in 12.86.500.K. Almost all areas within 3 miles of the project area are zoned RA, R, or I. Some community business zoning also exists within 1 mile of the project area. Noise from the project would take place from approximately 5am to 5pm. Work typically will not take place on weekends.

3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any.

Noise pollution from operations will be controlled by limiting operational hours of equipment and the remote location of the project will limit the impact of the noise.

8. Land and Shoreline Use

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.

The proposed project site is categorized as a “Working Forest,” within the 2022 King County Open Space Plan Update and Island Center Forest *Site Management Guidelines*. The King County Open Space Plan definition of “Working Forest” is *land managed to balance sustainable timber production with conservation, ecological restoration, and public use. These sites also support research related to forestry practices*. This proposal will not affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties.

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 because 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 nonforest use?

The proposed project is currently managed as forest lands for a variety of goals, such as sustainable timber harvesting to generate revenue with compatible public access. Adjacent properties include private residences to the north, south, and east of the project area, and additional public recreation land to the west. Timber extraction from prior landowners has occurred within the majority of the proposed Bypass Thin project areas. This project will not change the status of how Island Center Forest, or the adjacent lands in the project vicinity, are managed.

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?

No, there are no significant anticipated affects to surrounding farm or forest land operations or management, other than the periodic need for communicating the temporary public access recreation closures required to safely perform active forest health related management activities.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

No structures are located within the project area. Elsewhere in Island Center Forest, some minor

structures are present near the project sites, which are predominantly for managing existing recreation use and for security, safe recreation, and vehicle travel along King County forest management access roads. Examples include forest road gates, recreation information kiosks, trail bridges, and Sani-cans at the trailhead.

d. Will any structures be demolished? If so, what?

No.

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

The proposed project sites are located within Island Center Forest and the parcels have a zoning classification of RA – Rural Area.

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

The current comprehensive plan designation of Island Center Forest is RA (Rural).

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

Not applicable. The closest designated shoreline management area in Robinwood Creek is well outside of the designated project area.

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

Yes. The entirety of the site has been designated as a critical aquifer recharge area (Categories 1 and 3). There are also several water bodies and wetlands that exist within Island Center Forest and are classified as environmentally sensitive areas according to King County iMap, but none of these areas are within the proposed project area.

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

Not applicable. This project does not include housing.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable.

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

King County's Island Center Forest was acquired to preserve the natural resources located

in Island Center Forest including Mukai Pond and Meadowlake Pond wetlands, and the headwaters of Judd Creek; to demonstrate environmentally-sound forest management; to enhance flood protection for Judd Creek; and to provide passive recreational opportunities for the public. Forestry and recreational uses must preserve the site's ecological, wildlife and water quality values. Site management guidelines have been prepared for the site, with guidance to protect and restore the health and diversity of the forest, while providing passive trail access in concert with protecting the site's conservation values. This proposal is compatible with the various strategies and goals outlined in the *Island Center Site Management Guidelines*.

The 2022 *King County Open Space Plan* update also helped to guide this proposal. This effort updates Parks' 2016 plan, reflecting the current factors that influence how King County provides parks and recreation service. The Open Space Plan reconfirms the agency's mission and goals of stewarding regional and local parks, regional and backcountry trails, natural areas, and forests to provide recreation and environmental benefits. The plan addresses the King County Strategic Plan's goals of achieving environmental and social justice, public engagement, environmental and financial sustainability, quality local government, and regional collaboration. In addition, many of Parks' goals and objectives are informed by the Clean Water Healthy Habitat strategic plan, Land Conservation Initiative, Strategic Climate Action Plan, 30-Year Forest Plan, and Salmon Recovery Plans. These related efforts often include their own goals, objectives and targets that help Parks prioritize projects, programs, and investments. Island Center Forest is identified as a rural "working forest," Open Space Park Classification, within the 2022 King County Open Space Plan. This project proposal is compatible with this land use type classification, of "land managed to balance sustainable timber production with conservation, ecological restoration, and public use. These sites also support research related to forestry practices."

The *Island Center Forest Site Management Guidelines* (completed April 2006, updated November 2017) identified objectives, strategies, management, and implementation plans that are consistent with the components of this project proposal. More recently, King County conducted virtual public meetings and several targeted recreation and non-profit group outreach efforts. These forestry planning and outreach processes actively engaged the public and helped contribute to developing the project planning concepts and proposals for Island Center Forest.

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

The proposed project site is located within forest lands designated as rural "working forest," Open Space Park Classification, within the *2022 King County Open Space Plan Update*. This project proposal is compatible with this land use type classification, of "land managed to balance sustainable timber production with conservation, ecological restoration, and public use. These sites also support research related to forestry practices." The proposed projects directly accomplish the stated objectives and will provide timber production and other forest health actions. Locating facilities and trails in long-term sustainable locations, while coordinating trail development and maintenance with forest health and stewardship actions is an ongoing King County-management process that seeks to strike a balance between limiting the timeframe of temporary trail access closures, while continuing to actively implement forest stewardship activities.

9. Housing

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

None proposed. No housing will be provided.

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

None proposed. No housing will be eliminated.

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

Not applicable. There will be no housing impacts.

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?**

No permanent or temporary structures will be constructed as part of this project.

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

The forestry project will potentially create temporary views to the east and south from the 115th Bypass trail, Techmo trail, and Fir Hill trail located within Island Center Forest. Mt. Rainier could be visible in some areas.

Private residences to the north, east, and south of Island Center Forest may see the harvest project from their properties.

Park users on trails adjacent to the project area will experience disturbed forest conditions for 1 to 5 years which most people find aesthetically displeasing. Within a couple of growing seasons, planted trees and legacy shrubs and forbs grow up and restore a more pleasing visual experience. The nature of the forested view will change from a densely-populated, even-aged conifer forest canopy with little light reaching the ground to an uneven-aged conifer forest with remnant old trees, habitat snags, and young, root rot-resistant conifers.

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

Relatively high tree retention will visually break up the harvest area, providing more aesthetically pleasing tree patterns relative to heavier clearcut forestry harvests. Logging slash will be re-distributed through the project area, and no substantial slash piles will be left after the work is complete.

11. Light and Glare

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

Some light will be produced from the safety lights of logging equipment and head and taillights of log trucks. This light will occur only during operational hours as described above in question 7.b.2 (Noise).

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?

None.

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

Limiting heavy equipment operations to hours described in question 7.b.2 (Noise) and the remote location of the project will also limit the impacts of light or glare.

12. Recreation

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

Island Center Forest offers approximately 10 miles of multi-use trail access for non-motorized visitors, and is primarily used by the hiking community, but includes trail access for horseback riding and mountain biking, with all users yielding to equestrian travel along the trails. Multiple trailheads are available for access, including a large parking lot for horse trailers at the 188th trailhead. While there are several County- and City-owned parks and open spaces in the area, none are connected to or in the immediate vicinity of Island Center Forest.

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

No. This proposal will cause temporary closures of existing trails, but no physical impacts and no long-term closures to trails are part of this proposal. A planned trail reroute within Unit E will be protected from heavy equipment crossings. 115th Bypass will be used for logging operations. 115th Bypass is an abandoned logging road that is now a two-track trail. This project will widen the road to up to 12 feet, though nine to 10 feet will be more typical. This also includes mowing vegetation and some tree cutting, minor earth work along the shoulders, improvements to drainage, grading, and limited gravel. Up to 400 feet of 188th Bypass trail will also experience this work. 188th trail will be removed and revegetated after the forestry work is complete. 115th bypass will undergo "naturalization", where the road base will remain in place but logs and potentially soil will be positioned to make the trail feel more aesthetically pleasing.

Heavy equipment may cross Fir Hill trail to cut dead and dying trees at County-approved crossing points. No yarding will take place across this trail. If needed, slash mats or other protective measures will be used to reduce impacts to this trail. The County will restore any impacts to original condition if needed.

Heavy equipment may walk along the Gallups and 115th Bypass trails to travel between the Cemetery unit and Mukai units. Tree cutting along the shoulders may take place to allow passage of the equipment. No logging, trucking, or yarding will occur along that route. That trail is a former logging road that has grown in with small-diameter red alder. Track mark and minor routing will occur. Soil impacts will be restored to original condition.

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

The forester may designate approved yarding corridors across the trail in Unit B only when it is unavoidable for logging operations. If yarding takes place across the corridor, disturbed soil will be re-graded to the original contours by the end of the project.

13. Historic and Cultural Preservation

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.

There are no 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. The Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barreling Plant (45KI615) is in Island Center Forest Park. This property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Washington Heritage Barn Register, and the Washington Heritage Register. The Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barreling Plant is not in the portion of the park where the forest work is planned, so there will be no negative impacts to 45KI615.

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.

There are no recorded landmarks, features, or other known and documented evidence of Indian or historic use or occupation in the project area. To date, no human burials or old cemeteries have been recorded in the immediate project vicinity. There are no known instances of identified material evidence, artifacts, or other documented areas of cultural importance on or near the site. The uplands on Vashon Island were used by people in the past and it should be assumed that past evidence of that use could be in the project vicinity; however, it has yet to be formally identified and documented. A systematic professional study of Island Center Forest Park has not occurred in the past, though scattered, non-diagnostic debris, such as glass and metal items, have been observed along the trails throughout the park during field reconnaissance, and by patrons and volunteers. No significant cultural materials were identified. This project will comply with all

applicable laws and regulations concerning cultural resources.

- 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.**

King County Parks submitted this project to the King County Historic Preservation Program for review to assess the potential impacts to cultural and historic resources on or near the project. The King County Historic Preservation Program reviews data from previously completed archaeological surveys, other nearby investigations, historic maps, aerial images, GIS data, ethnographic information, and state databases to assign a sensitivity risk factor to the project and treatment recommendations. The King County Historic Preservation Program reviewed the proposed project and determined there is lower potential for encountering intact buried archaeological sites in the forest thinning area based on environmental and other factors, such as the glacial soils and past logging disturbance. The King County Historic Preservation Program said that work by trained individuals may proceed following the standard Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP), and also asked project managers to consult with the Suquamish Tribe and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians about the project. King County Parks will contact the interested Tribes to inform them about the project separately from this SEPA notice, as well as to solicit comments, concerns, and to exchange information about potential impacts to resources on or near the project area.

- 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.**

Negative impacts to historic properties are not expected during this project. No excavation permits are currently required to complete the project. If future field investigations identify cultural resources, then King County Parks will obtain any needed state-issued Excavation Permits prior to project work. In addition, King County Parks will follow the Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) for this project. So, project work will be completed by crews that have been trained in how to recognize cultural resources and what to do if they are found.

14. Transportation

- 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.**

Trailheads at Island Center Forest currently serving the park will continue to provide vehicle parking and access for visitors throughout the project period, with the exception of the Mukai Trailhead (at 115th Bypass) and Cemetery Trailhead due to log truck traffic and road restrictions. Phased closures of trails within the units will be implemented to minimize the extent and duration of trail closures in the park. Two other trailheads, 188th and Westside trailheads, will remain accessible to park users. 188th trailhead is accessed from the junction of 107th Ave SW and SW 188th St. Westside trailhead is accessed from Westside Hwy SW, near the transfer station at the borrow pit.

- 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?

Public bus transit service stops do not directly service Island Center Forest, but stops are nearby on Vashon Highway SW/99th Ave SW. King County Metro Bus Route 118 and 119 offer stops nearby, as well as an option to flag down or disembark a bus en route if no official stop exists and it is safe to pull over.

- c. 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).**

Minor enhancements to the gravel surface through additional layers and size of gravel will be required for the Mukai/115th access road. This is a public road. For descriptions of road modifications within the park, please refer to Questions A.11 and B.1.e.

- d. Will the project or proposal use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of) water, rail, or air transportation? If so, generally describe.**

Washington State Ferry services will be used to transport log trucks, empty and loaded, to and from the island. Logs will be transported to various mills chosen by the contractor.

- e. 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?**

Up to five log truck loads per day would leave the site over an eight-to-ten-week period, totaling around 110 log truck loads. In addition, there would be a few trips per day to and from the site in personal vehicles by logging contractors, consultants, and/or County staff. We do not anticipate changes to vehicle traffic from people using the park for recreation.

- f. 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.**

No, the proposal is located within Island Center Forest, which has a King County Open Space Plan classification of "Working Forest." The Open Space Plan definition of "Working Forest" is "land managed to balance sustainable timber production with conservation, ecological restoration, and public use. These sites also support research related to forestry practices." Forests can also provide economic value, both as a source of revenue generated from harvesting timber and other forest products and as a recreation destination. King County supports working forests, and as such classifies some forested properties as working forestlands. These lands preserve contiguous tracts of forested property (primarily in the Rural Forest Focus Areas and the Forest Production District) to retain active forestry, protect areas from development and/or provide a buffer between commercial forests and adjacent residential development.

King County's working forests were acquired for, and are managed to support, sustainable timber production in service to conservation and restoration objectives. These lands also provide for public use where appropriate. King County conducted forest health thinning projects in the past with the goal of forest stand health improvement. King County will conduct similar forest stewardship activities in the future. King County Parks has received certification from the Forest Stewardship Council for sustainably managing Island Center Forest.

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

Drivers will reduce impacts to transportation by avoiding surface street usage where possible, utilizing the nearby highway and driving at or below posted speed limits. Signage alerting vehicles of log trucks entering the road will be posted at the junction of SW Bank Road and 115th Ave SW (Mukai Pond).

15. Public Services

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.

During project work, there is a chance that public firefighting resources will be needed due to slightly elevated risk of fire ignition. After the project is complete, we do not foresee any increased need for public services.

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

WA DNR IFPL requirements will be followed, including keeping fire mitigation tools on site at all times during operations to reduce the risk of fire ignition.

16. Utilities

a. Circle utilities currently available at the site: electricity, natural gas, water, refuse service, telephone, sanitary sewer, septic system, other:

No utilities are located on site, but there are portable toilets available at the 188th trailhead and the Cemetery trailhead for use by project workers.

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.

No utilities are proposed for the project.

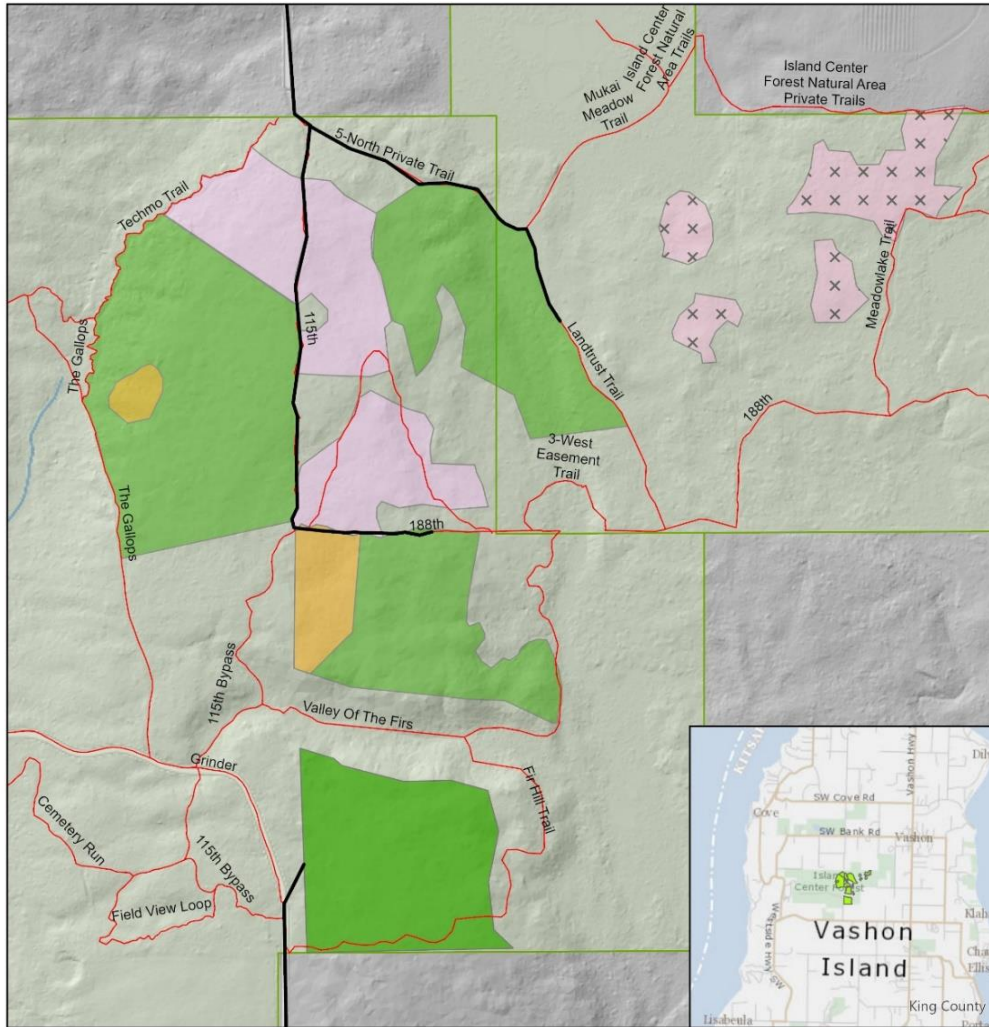
C. Signature

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.

DocuSigned by:
Paul Fischer
CFB9BDD6496D454...

Date 5/3/2024 | 7:52 AM PDT

Paul Fischer, Senior Forester, King County Parks and Recreation Division



King County Parks Island Center Forest Proposed Forestry Project "Bypass Thin" 2024

- Haul Routes Log Trucks
- Trails in King County
- Forestry Work**
- Douglas-Fir Thin
- Root Rot Tree Removal + Plant
- Alder Removal + Plant
- ⊗ Alder Hand-Cut + Plant (no removal)
- King County Parks Property Line

0 400 800 1,200
Feet
Scale: 1:7,200



King County

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