



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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David Farmer
Acting Forest Supervisor
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Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Supervisor's Office
215 Melody Lane
Wenatchee, WA 98801

August 11, 2026

Subject: WDFW Comments on I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East-Public Safety/Wildlife Closure Area
Draft Environmental Assessment

Dear Mr. Farmer:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East-Public Safety/Wildlife Closure Area Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is a part of the long-term planning group associated with developing and implementing the wildlife connectivity aspect of the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project and has been involved in the working group since its inception. Significant public investment has been made into developing this project to allow for fish and wildlife habitat connectivity through the I-90 corridor from Hyak to Easton. Connecting these fish and wildlife habitats and their populations helps to support WDFW's mission to preserve, protect and perpetuate the state's fish, wildlife and ecosystems.

We appreciate that the United States Forest Service (USFS) has coordinated closely with WDFW on all aspects of the project, including viable options to limit recreation in or near these wildlife crossing structures. As explained in the EA, existing science has demonstrated that there is a negative correlation between human and wildlife use near these structures, where increased human usage typically equates to decreased wildlife usage of the structures. In addition to connecting wildlife populations, having wildlife use these structures results in having fewer wildlife vehicle collisions, which increases the public safety along the interstate.

WDFW is in support of the proposed closure order as outlined in the EA to ensure that these structures function as intended to connect fish and wildlife populations and increase public highway safety. We would like to offer two clarifying comments to the EA proposal. The first is that the Notice of Opportunity to Comment refers to an extension of the temporary closure for 5 years while the EA refers to the closure as permanent. We recommend clarifying this statement in the final document. WDFW is supportive of a permanent closure order to ensure long-term protection of these structures for fish and wildlife connectivity. The second is in the Alternatives proposed in the EA, it references that long-term wildlife monitoring will provide an opportunity to reassess the closure size and effectiveness. WDFW recommends that this adaptive

management approach be included in the final document to assess the effectiveness of the proposed closure area and be open to future discussions if existing open roads and trails which are currently exempt from this order should be modified based on future data collected. We believe this data-based approach is the correct management to ensure long-term viability of these wildlife connectivity structures.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the continued partnership in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Livingston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Mike Livingston
Region 3 Director