

# DECISION NOTICE AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

## Suiattle Road 26 Repair Environmental Assessment

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### USDA – Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Darrington Ranger District, Snohomish County, Washington

An Environmental Assessment (EA) that discusses the proposed Suiattle Road 26 Repair on the Darrington Ranger District, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest has been completed. The EA is available at the Darrington Ranger District office, 1405 Emens Avenue North, Darrington, Washington 98241 and on the Forest website at [www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs). The proposed project is located in Section 14, R.11 E., T.32 N. and Sections 14 and 24, R. 12 E., T.32 N, within the Suiattle River drainage. The proposed action addresses the need to repair flood-damaged roads to meet access needs for the administration and management of forestlands, as well as provide visitor access.

### Decision

Based on my review of alternatives, it is my decision to select **Alternative C** to repair the flood-damaged sites on Road 26. The rationale for my decision is presented below. My decision takes into consideration the analysis and evaluation disclosed in the environmental assessment, including the manner in which each of the alternatives met the purpose and need for action and addressed the significant issues and public comments raised during analysis.

A complete description of Alternative C repairs is found in Chapter 2 of the Suiattle Road 26 Repair Environmental Assessment. In summary, Alternative C will restore vehicle access to Road 26 through various site-specific road repairs. This alternative will restore access to established facilities and recreational use and have a low risk of future washouts at these sites. Access will also be restored for dispersed recreational activities and Forest Service administrative needs.

My decision includes the following repair:

**Site #1 MP 14.4:** The new road will be located approximately 60 to 125 feet further from the Suiattle River and outside of the banks of the Wild and Scenic River. The temporary road (about 400 feet) along the river will be removed. The beginning section of the Huckleberry Trail will be obliterated by the road relocation so new trail (about 1,400 feet) will be constructed from the trailhead to tie into the existing trail further upslope. The Huckleberry Trailhead (parking lot and road entrance) will be reconfigured to use a portion of the existing road.

The removal of the temporary bypass will require excavation with hauling and disposal of an estimated 1,500 cubic yards of material and replacement of the existing 24-inch diameter culvert with a 48-inch culvert (100-year flood capacity) in the non-fish bearing stream. Excess excavated materials will be hauled to the rock pit located at MP 3.2 on Road 2680. Work will occur outside of the banks of the Suiattle Wild and Scenic River.

The relocation route will be about 600 feet long and will require excavation and fill to grade level with approximately 3,000 cubic yards of unclassified borrow and material taken from the cut sections and former bypass. This relocation will require the clearing of about 30 to 40 trees (24 inches in diameter to 73 inches) and other smaller trees and vegetation from approximately one acre. Some trees will be used to meet current or future instream or down woody debris objectives within the riparian reserve. Three of the largest Douglas-fir trees will be left outside the clearing limits at the MP 14.4 site to meet down wood guidelines of the MBS Forest-wide Programmatic Wildlife Biological Assessment.

**Site #2 MP 21.9 Downey:** A concrete faced retaining wall will be built at the edge of the Downey Creek Bridge deck and along the replaced road fill. Existing on-site material will be used for the retaining wall backfill. Up to 100 cubic yards of riprap will be installed to protect the concrete wing walls. This design will enlarge the area for the channel under the bridge by another 17.5 feet and armor the road fill to reduce the risk of future erosion. Total width under the bridge will be about 85 feet (estimated bankfull channel width). All work will occur outside the wetted channel. An existing 48-inch culvert located west of the bridge will be replaced with an eight-foot overflow relief culvert. The damaged railing will be repaired and the gravel road surfacing replaced.

**Site #3 MP 22.9 Sulphur:** A concrete faced retaining wall will be built at the edge of the Sulphur Creek bridge deck and keyed to the bank. Existing on-site material will be used for the retaining wall backfill. This will include excavating existing material and placing a portion of this for backfill. Up to 100 cubic yards of riprap will be installed to protect the concrete wing walls. This design will enlarge the area for the channel under the bridge by another 15 feet for a total width of about 65 feet (estimated bankfull channel width is 64 feet). All work will occur outside of the wetted channel. The damaged railing will be repaired or replaced.

Implementation of the repairs is expected to begin in the summer of 2006 and be complete in the fall, or in 2007.

## **Mitigation Measures Included in the Decision**

My decision also includes the following mitigation measures and monitoring requirements (EA, page 34-36). These mitigation measures were developed to minimize or avoid potential resource impacts, and are required actions in the implementation of this decision:

## **Fisheries, Hydrology, Riparian Reserve**

1. Roads will be minimized in Riparian Reserves; location, design, and (re)construction of necessary crossings should be based on methods that minimize disruption to natural hydrologic paths and adverse effects to aquatic resources, including avoiding sidecasting of loose material; new permanent stream crossings will accommodate at least the 100-year flood, including associated bedload and debris.
2. Large woody material removed from an existing culvert inlet will be put back into the stream channel downstream of the culvert, unless doing so would cause habitat degradation.
3. Construction activities in or adjacent to perennial streams will be conducted during summer low-flow season. Design, construction, and maintenance procedures to limit sediment delivery to streams from the road surface will be applied.
4. Outsloping of the roadway surface is preferred unless outsloping will increase sediment delivery to streams or where outsloping is infeasible. Road drainage will be routed away from potentially unstable channels and hillslopes.
5. Wastewater from project activities and water removed from within the work area shall be routed to an area landward of the ordinary high water line to allow removal of fine sediment and other contaminants prior to being discharged to the stream.
6. Erosion control methods will be used to prevent silt-laden water from entering the stream. Methods may include, but are not limited to: straw bales, silt fencing, filter fabric, temporary sediment ponds, check dams of pea gravel-filled burlap bags or other material, and/or immediate mulching of exposed areas. Erosion control measures must be in place prior to the normal heavy rainfall period. Excess material shall be disposed of and stabilized so it does not enter stream channels or water bodies.
7. Repairs along all roads should be monitored during rainy periods and when soils are excessively wet, and work restricted as necessary to minimize the potential for downstream sedimentation.
8. To minimize effects to water quality, hazardous spill clean-up materials will be available on-site prior to starting work; any machinery maintenance involving potential contaminants (fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, etc.) will occur at an approved site or outside the Riparian Reserve; prior to starting work each day, all machinery will be checked for leaks and all necessary repairs made.
9. Where project activities potentially affect the beds or banks of streams or other water bodies, provisions specified in the WDFW HPA for the project shall apply, including in-water timing periods.

## **Cultural Resources**

1. Should previously unidentified heritage resources be discovered during project implementation, or if an identified resource is affected in an unanticipated way, the Heritage Specialist shall be notified, and the Forest Service will fulfill its responsibilities within the Programmatic Agreement regarding Cultural Resource Management.

## **Botany**

1. Equipment brought on to the National Forest must be free of weeds and weed seeds, and must be cleaned before leaving the site. Because the herb Robert infestation at Site #1 is confined to the area east of the stream, ground clearing should proceed from west to east (from uninfested to infested). All gravel, fill, and borrow materials must come from weed-free sources. The stockpiled waste material will be monitored by the District Botanist, and any herb Robert germinants will be hand-pulled.
2. Abandoned roads will be seeded and mulched to deter the establishment of noxious weeds where there are significant portions of bare soil remaining. Fertilizer is not recommended. Seed and straw mulch must be free of weeds and weed seeds. The mix to use consists of the following: soft white winter wheat (*cultivar of Triticum aestivum*) @ 50 lbs/acre; slender wheat grass (*Elymus trachycaulis*, aka, *Agropyron trachycaulus*) @ 20 lbs/acre; annual ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*) @ 20 lbs/acre; Austrian winter peas (*Pisum sativum arvense*) @ 5 lbs/acre; and the goal is 170 seeds per square foot. Native plant species are typically unable to out-compete invasive plants in disturbed habitats.

## **Wildlife**

1. For Alternatives B and C, project work at the Site #1 MP 14.4 will not occur after October 31 and before March 15 to minimize potential noise impacts to wintering eagles along the Suiattle River.
2. For Alternative C, tree felling at the Site #1 MP 14.4 will not occur from March 1 to September 30 to minimize the risk of impacts to spotted owls or murrelets that potentially could be nesting at the site.
3. For Alternative C, three of the largest Douglas-fir trees cleared for the road relocation segment at the Site #1 MP 14.4 will be left to meet down wood guidelines of the MBS Forest-wide Programmatic Wildlife Biological Assessment. The felled trees will be located as such to reduce vulnerability to firewood cutters. If necessary, trees will be marked with “no cutting” signs to discourage removal by firewood cutters.

## **Reasons for the Decision**

I have selected Alternative C because I believe that this alternative best meets the purpose and need identified in the EA (page 3), while providing the most cost-efficient option that restores access, minimizes risk of future washouts and sediment delivery to aquatic habitats, improves

channel morphology and floodplain connectivity, maintains the free-flowing characteristic of the Skagit Wild and Scenic River system, and improves parking at Huckleberry Mountain Trailhead. The project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these species; and does not result in the adverse modification of designated critical habitat through the removal of one acre of low-quality spotted owl and marbled murrelet nesting and roosting habitat.

I examined management of the flood-damaged roads in relation to the goals and objectives outlined in the Forest Plan, as amended, which include managing the transportation system at the minimum standard needed to support planned uses and activities, and provide for public safety (USDA FS 1990, p. 4-7). I also considered the access needs and resource concerns noted in the Forest-wide Roads Analysis (EA pages 30-31).

In making my decision, I also considered: responsiveness of the various alternatives to the major issues (see below); other applicable laws, regulations, and policies; Tribal treaty rights; public input; and the effects of the alternatives on the physical, biological, social, and economic environment (EA pages 30-110). I believe that Alternative C provides the best balance between resource protection, access and safety needs, and cost considerations.

I most closely considered the issues of restoring vehicle access, expense of repairs, and risk of future washouts and repair, impacts on the Wild and Scenic River, impacts on fish habitat and riparian reserves, and impacts on old growth and spotted owl and murrelet habitat.

**How My Decision Addresses the Issue of Restore Vehicle Access:** My decision responds to the high need for this road system for a wide variety of recreation and administrative use. The Suiattle Road 26 is a high level, highly used recreation route on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (EA, pages 3-4, 30-35, and 39-45). Access to the river for boating will be restored and the risk of future washouts will be less (EA page 35). My decision will restore vehicle access to Sulphur Creek Campground and the Suiattle and Downey Creek Trailheads and reduce the future risk of road washout and loss of vehicle access to Buck Creek Campground, Suiattle Guard Station, Green Mountain, Buck and Huckleberry Trailheads, and for dispersed recreation (EA pages 39-46) and administrative and emergency use (EA pages 32-33) on about 18 miles of road. This road also provides access to private land (EA pages 32).

**How my Decision Addresses the Issue of Repairs May be Expensive and High Risk of Future Washouts and Repairs:** My decision for repairs will cost about \$245,000 (\$35,000 less than Alternative B, EA pages 33-35). Future maintenance costs will remain the same as pre-flood (estimated at \$11,250). My decision will reduce the risk of future washouts by relocating the roadway further away from the river at Site #1 (MP14.4) and pulling back approach fills and installing concrete retaining walls at Downey Creek (Site #2) and Sulphur Creek (Site #3) to protect the road slope and increase the channel width under the bridges (EA pages 33-35). The need for future repairs at these repair sites will be low.

**How My Decision Addresses Impacts to Wild and Scenic River:** My decision will not involve repairs within or adjacent to the Suiattle River; this, combined with the realignment of the road away from the river, resulted in the determination that a Section 7(a) Determination is not needed (Wild and Scenic Rivers, as per FSM 2354.7 and WO amendment 2300-2004-2). My decision will protect the free flowing characteristics and water quality of the river and the outstandingly remarkable characteristics of wildlife, fish, and scenic quality (EA, pages 35-38).

**How My Decision Addresses Impacts to Fish Habitat and Riparian Reserves:** My decision will result in a minimal amount of sedimentation, and will move the road approach fills out of the bankfull channel width under the Site #2 Downey Creek Bridge and the Site #3 Sulphur Creek Bridge (EA pages 47-63). My decision will not change existing trends in Chinook and bull trout populations (federally listed fish) or measurably influence fish populations and is not likely to affect habitat. Sedimentation will be short term and not exceed transport capacity or natural variation. Large woody debris loading and routing channel morphology, and the natural hydrology flow in Downey and Sulphur Creeks will be improved, as the area under the bridges will be increased (65-69). There will be a small effect on two percent of the project area Riparian Reserve by removal of one acre of riparian vegetation in order to relocate the road further away (60 to 125 feet) from the Suiattle River at Site #1 MP 14.4. Riparian conditions will be improved at Site #2 Downey Creek and Site #3 Sulphur Creek (EA pages 83-86).

**How My Decision Addresses Impacts to Old Growth and Spotted Owl and Murrelet Habitat:** My decision is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl or marbled murrelet and does not result in the adverse modification of designated critical habitat through the removal of one acre of low quality nesting and roosting habitat. The removal of 30 to 40 large trees will not appreciably diminish the vast amount of old growth in the Suiattle area (EA pages 92-95).

## **All Alternatives Considered in Detail**

Two action alternatives and the no action alternative were analyzed in detail in the EA, along with three alternatives that were considered but eliminated from detailed study (EA pages 21-23).

**Alternative A- No Action:** There will be no repairs made to the current damaged roads. I did not select this alternative because it does not meet the need to restore vehicle access for recreation and administration of the forestlands. If no action were implemented, there would be no vehicle access to the Sulphur Creek Campground and the Suiattle and Downey Creek Trailheads. There would also be a high risk of future road washout at Site #1 that would prevent vehicle access to Buck Creek Campground, Suiattle Guard Station and Green Mountain and Buck Creek Trailheads and 18 miles of roads.

**Alternative B:** Alternative B is similar to my selected alternative in meeting the purpose and need to restore vehicle access, but it has a moderate risk of future loss of access at Site #1 (EA pages 33-37) and it would have an adverse affect on critical habitat for federally listed fish species and would not improve aquatic conditions (EA pages 53-63).

**Alternative C-Selected Alternative:** As described above (see Decision), implementation of this alternative will include relocating Road 26 further away from the river at Site #1 and would install retaining walls at Site #2 Downey Creek Bridge and at Site #3 Sulphur Creek Bridge to enlarge the channel area under the bridges.

## **Public Involvement**

Government-to-government consultation and tribal notification was initiated in January 2004; the public was notified in February 2004. This proposed action was mailed along with other flood related proposed actions to 9 Tribes, and over 457 individuals. Twenty-nine articles regarding the flood damaged roads, trails, and meetings appeared in local newspapers. Two public meetings were held with a total of 50 people in attendance (EA, pages 16). The public was asked to provide any information that would help the agency in developing this project proposal. The Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie website also presented information regarding the 2003 floods, maps, and contact information.

Many useful written comments were received in the scoping process from the following organizations and individuals: Chris Detrick of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Steve Hinton and Devon Smith of the Skagit River System Cooperative, Thomas O'Keefe of American Whitewater, Connie Kelleher of American Rivers, Eric Myren of Washington Recreational River Runners, Marc Bardsley of North Cascades Conservation Council, Katherine Johnson of Pilchuck Audubon Society, Shari Brewer of Off the Beaten Path, Steve Hinton of Swinomish Tribal Community and Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe. Individuals included Dale Wick, Matthew Riggen, Bob Boyd, Jim Scarborough, Phil Leatherman, Michael Andreoni and Val Brown, Mike and Ruth Hardy, Mike Torok, and Paul Wagner (EA pages 112).

Generally, respondents were interested in the effects of the road repairs on their access to the area, fish habitat, risk of future flood events and repairs, expense, and old growth. Some commented that consideration should be given to decommissioning Road 26 or converting it to a trail. Others expressed concern over the roads location in the Wild and Scenic River corridor. A number of respondents supported expedited repairs to restore access for recreation or to the existing boat launch sites.

Public comments were considered throughout the process of developing the preliminary EA. The Preliminary EA was made available for public review and comment for a 30-day period from May 13, 2005 through June 13, 2005. The complete document was also made available on the MBS website.

Nine responses were received during this comment period from the following organizations and individuals: Olympic Forest Coalition, Skagit River System Cooperative, Dale Wick, Michael Andreoni, Mike Torok, Mike and Ruth Hardy, Jim Scarborough, Pilchuck Audubon Society, North Cascades Conservation Council (EA pages 113-128).

I have reviewed and considered all substantive comments received in response to the Preliminary EA, and have used these comments to enhance the project analysis. Selected comments and how my decision responds to those viewpoints are noted below. See EA page 113) for a table of the substantive comments received.

Several commenters responded that they thought the road should be decommissioned or converted to a trail. This alternative was studied, but not in detail (EA page 21-22): this alternative was not studied in detail because it did not meet the purpose and need to restore vehicle access to Road 26. Also, a few commenters requested that an additional bridge that would span the Downey Creek alluvial fan (floodplain) should be analyzed in detail. This alternative was examined, but not in detail (EA 22): my decision includes a repair design that will meet current Forest Plan standards. It will accommodate at least the 100-year flood, including associated bedload and debris and increases the area under the bridge to bankfull channel width. In addition, all replaced culverts will meet Forest Plan standards and accommodate a 100-year flood (Standard and Guidelines RF-4 and RF-6, USDA, USDI 1994; EA, pages 60-61, pages 85-86). In addition, there is no funding available at this time for an additional bridge.

## **Finding of No Significant Impact**

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I have determined through the environmental analysis that the activities included in my decision (Alternative C) are not a major federal action, individually or cumulatively, that will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This determination was made considering the following factors:

In terms of context (40 CFR 1508.27(a)): this project is site-specific to the Suiattle Road 26 Repairs and by itself, does not have international, national, region-wide or statewide importance. Resource commitments include rock for the road and converting one acre of forest into a road, which is a common use on the MBS, and was the only irreversible or irretrievable resource (EA, page 109-110).

### **In Terms of Intensity (40 CFR 1508.27(b))**

Environmental consequences of the action discussed in the EA (page 30-110) are both beneficial and adverse; however, the impacts are not significant and on balance, the effects will be beneficial. There are short-term potential impacts to fish and wildlife species during repair (see EA pages 53-110, USFWS Biological Opinion). Beneficial effects include pulling back road approach fill at the Site #2 Downey Creek Bridge and the Site #3 Sulphur Creek

Bridge along with replacing two culverts with larger one to improve aquatic conditions (EA pages 60-61, pages 85-86).

My decision will not adversely affect public health or safety. Road 26 will be restored and/or upgraded to public access and should benefit the public safety of those who use it. Road 26 will be treated to reduce the risk of future failures and associated sedimentation into streams a public health and safety benefit.

My decision will not adversely affect unique characteristics of the geographic area such as historical or cultural resources, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. The action is in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act under the terms of the 1997 Programmatic Agreement between the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, the Washington State Historic Preservation Office, and the Forest Service (EA pages 105-106). Effects on the Wild and Scenic River have been avoided with the design of the road reroute at MP 14.4; there will be no impact to the free flowing characteristics of the Suiattle River (EA pages 35-39).

The effects of the projects, including cumulative effects, are only somewhat controversial among a small segment of the local population (EA pages 113-133); however, the effects are well understood.

The possible effects on the human environment do not involve any highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. The effects on wildlife habitat and aquatic system components are disclosed in the EA (pages 30-101) and are based on sound scientific research, as well as previous experience in the basin and on the Forest. The effects on access and resources are clearly disclosed in the EA (pages 30-101).

The action is unlikely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or to represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. This action is not unusual and does not lead to further action that is unique.

The effects of the action were evaluated in relation to other actions with individually insignificant effects. There are not significant cumulative effects between this project and other projects implemented or planned (EA 35, 39, 46, 62, 79, 86, 100, 104, and 108).

My decision will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and will not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources (EA pages 105-106). Also, see factor #3.

Fish Biological Assessments and consultations were completed with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in August of 2004 and February of 2006 (documentation located in project file). There is concurrence on an effect

determination of “*Not Likely to Adversely Affect*” bull trout and Puget Sound Chinook salmon or their designated critical habitat (EA pages 53-61) due to repair work near streams.

Wildlife Biological Assessments and consultations were completed with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) March of 2006. There was a “*not likely to jeopardize the spotted owl or marbled murrelet or destroy or adversely modify*” critical habitat. There was an effect determination of “*Not Likely to Adversely Affect*” bald eagle, and “*No Effect*” on grizzly bear, gray wolf, or lynx. As described below, my decision does not threaten to violate any Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment (EA pages 92-96).

## **Other Findings Required by Law or Regulation**

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): NEPA establishes the process and content requirements of environmental analysis and documentation for projects such as the Suiattle Road 26 Repair EA. I find that the entire process of analysis and preparation of this EA was undertaken in accordance with the regulations outlined in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15. There were a number of opportunities for public involvement during the course of the analysis (EA 16, 111-133, and Public Involvement section above). I used the comments received during scoping and in response to the Preliminary EA to make my decision.

**National Forest Management Act (NFMA):** I have reviewed the project and find Alternative C to be consistent with the goals, objectives, standards and guidelines of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest (Forest Plan), as amended (see EA page 6 for major amendments). The action will not alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.

My decision is consistent with applicable Riparian Reserve standards and guidelines (EA pages 83-86). Watershed analysis has been completed for the Suiattle Watershed; USDA Forest Service 2004 (EA page 12). Relevant information and recommendations from the analysis were used in the design and assessment of this project. All repair sites are within Riparian Reserve and the repairs will improve the hydrologic flow, better accommodate a 100-year flood, and improve channel morphology and floodplain connectivity (EA pages 64-86). I find that the selected Alternative C is designed to contribute to maintaining and restoring the fifth-field watershed over the long term, and will contribute to meeting the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

My decision is consistent with current direction contained in the January 2001 Record of Decision that amended the standards and guidelines for Survey and Manage plant and animal species (including protection buffer species and other mitigation measures), as modified or amended as of March 21, 2004. The last modification was the December 2003 Interagency Annual Species Review. (This 2001 ROD was reinstated via U.S. District Court order on January 9, 2006.) Botanical surveys of the project area were completed to current protocol and there will be no effects to these species (EA page 104). For Survey and Manage animals,

surveys were completed to current protocol and there will be no effects to these species (EA 102-104).

**Endangered Species Act and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act:** Fish and wildlife biological assessments and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have been completed (documentation located in project file). Alternative C is “*Not Likely to Adversely Affect*” bull trout and Puget Sound Chinook salmon or their designated critical habitat (EA page 53-63) due to repair work near streams. There was a “*not likely to jeopardize the spotted owl or marbled murrelet or destroy or adversely modify*” critical habitat. There was an effect determination of “*Not Likely to Adversely Affect*” bald eagle, and “*No Effect*” on grizzly bear, gray wolf, or lynx (EA pages 92-96).

**National Historic Preservation Act:** Cultural resource surveys have been completed and Alternative C is in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act under the terms of this Programmatic Agreement. There are no historic properties (EA, pages 105-106).

**Clean Air Act:** Practices, which could degrade air quality below health and visibility standards, are not proposed (EA page 109).

**Clean Water Act:** Alternative C will benefit objectives of the Clean Water Act through road repairs that will reduce surface erosion and sedimentation into streams and rivers and improve hydrologic flow conditions (EA pages 70-79). Implementation of my decision action will incorporate Conservation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to improve water quality conditions; these BMPs are described in mitigation measures (EA pages 25-26, and above in the Decision Notice). On National Forest System Land, no portions of the Suiattle River, or its tributary streams, have been listed by the Washington State Department of Ecology as impaired for some aspect of water quality under the Clean Water Act (303(d)) (EA page 70).

**Invasive Species Management:** This decision is consistent with direction in both the Forest’s and the Region’s recent decisions regarding invasive species management. BMPs to prevent noxious weed introduction and spread are incorporated into the mitigation measures (EA pages 25-26).

**Roads Analysis:** FSM 7712.15 provides that decisions made after January 12, 2002, must be informed by a roads analysis unless the Responsible Official determines that such analysis is not needed. I have reviewed the roads analysis and potential environmental and access effects associated with this project (EA pages 30-35) and have determined that I was sufficiently informed (Forest-wide Roads Analysis, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, 2003).

## Appeal Rights and Implementation

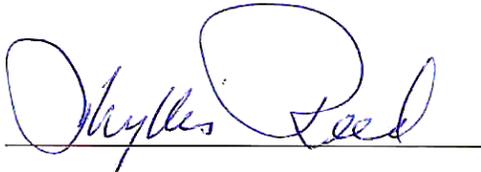
This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.7. Appeals must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215.14 (Content of a Notice of Appeal), and must provide sufficient evidence and rationale to show why the Responsible Official's decision should be remanded or reversed. A written notice of appeal must be submitted to the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the date of publication of this notice. Business office hours are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. The acceptable format for appeals filed electronically is WORD or RTF format with signature, attached to an e-mail message. Publication of this notice in the Everett Herald is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal and no other dates or timeframes should be relied upon. The Appeal Deciding Officer is:

Forest Supervisor, ATTN: 1570 Appeals,  
21905 64th Avenue West  
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-2278

FAX 425-744-3255, e-mail: [appeals-pacificnorthwest-mtbaker-snoqualmie@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-pacificnorthwest-mtbaker-snoqualmie@fs.fed.us)

Implementation of this decision may begin on the fifth business day following the close of the appeal-filing period (36 CFR 215.9) if no appeal is filed within the 45-day time period. If an appeal is filed, the decision will not be implemented before the fifteenth business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

For further information, contact Phyllis Reed, Darrington Ranger District, 1405 Emens Avenue North, Darrington, WA 98241, (360) 436-1155.



PHYLLIS REED  
District Ranger

3/30/06  
Date