

**WHATCOM COUNTY**

Planning & Development Services  
5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097  
360-676-6907, TTY 800-833-6384  
360-738-2525 Fax



**J.E. "Sam" Ryan**  
Director

SEPA Distribution List  
SEP2011-00093  
Date of Issuance: 2-24-2012

Please review this determination. If you have further comments, questions or would like a copy of the SEPA checklist, phone the responsible official at (360) 676-6907. Please submit your response by the comment date noted on the attached notice of determination.

SEPA Unit, WA State Department of Ecology, Olympia via email  
sepaunit@ecy.wa.gov

WA State Department of Archaeological and Historic Preservation

WA State Department of Natural Resources

Lummi Nation

Attn: Natural Resources Department

Attn: Cultural Resources Department

Nooksack Indian Tribe

Attn: Natural Resources Department

Attn: Cultural Resources Department

Applicant: Scott Williams, Puget Sound Energy

Other

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Director

## SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS)

**File:** SEP2011-00093

**Project Description:** Replace PSE's existing private land mobile radio system by installing a new 76.5' pole, two antennas, a 12' X 20' pre-manufactured equipment enclosure, backup generator, and two 250-gallon propane tanks within a new 50' X 50' fenced area adjacent to the existing Glacier Substation.

**Proponent:** Puget Sound Energy

**Address and Parcel #:** 6769 Vaughn Street, Glacier WA

**Lead Agency:** Whatcom County PDS

**Zoning:** RR-1      **Comp Plan:** Rural Community

The lead agency for this proposal has determined that with proper mitigation, no significant adverse environmental impacts are likely. Pursuant to RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c), an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required. This decision was made following review of a completed SEPA environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This DNS is issued after using the optional DNS process in WAC 197-11-355. There is no further comment period on the DNS.

Pursuant to WAC 197-11-340(2), the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date of issuance indicated below. Comments must be received by \_\_\_\_\_ and should be sent to:

**Responsible Official:** Tyler Schroeder

**Title:** Current Planning Supervisor

**Telephone:** 360-676-6907

**Address:** 5280 Northwest Drive  
Bellingham, WA 98226

**Date of Issuance:** February 24, 2012

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tyler Schroeder", is written over a horizontal line.

An aggrieved agency or person may appeal this determination to the Whatcom County Hearing Examiner. Application for appeal must be filed on a form provided by and submitted to the Whatcom County Current Planning Division located at 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226, during the ten days following the comment period, concluding March 5, 2012.

You should be prepared to make a specific factual objection. Contact Whatcom County Current Planning Division for information about the procedures for SEPA appeals.

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SEP 2011-00093

## SEPA Environmental Checklist

### Purpose of Checklist:

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requires all governmental agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposal before making decisions. An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared for all proposals with probable significant adverse impacts on the quality of the environment. The purpose of this checklist is to provide information to help you and the agency identify impacts from your proposal (and to reduce or avoid impacts from the proposal, if it can be done) and to help the agency decide whether an EIS is required.

### Instructions for Applicants:

This environmental checklist asks you to describe some basic information about your proposal. Governmental agencies use this checklist to determine whether the environmental impacts of your proposal are significant, requiring preparation of an EIS. Answer the questions briefly, with the most precise information known, or give the best description you can.

You must answer each question accurately and carefully, to the best of your knowledge. In most cases, you should be able to answer the questions from your own observations or project plans without the need to hire experts. If you really do not know the answer, or if a question does not apply to your proposal, write "do not know" or "does not apply." Complete answers to the questions now may avoid unnecessary delays later.

Some questions ask about governmental regulations, such as zoning, shoreline, and landmark designations. Answer these questions if you can. If you have problems, the governmental agencies can assist you.

The checklist questions apply to all parts of your proposal, even if you plan to do them over a period of time or on different parcels of land. Attach any additional information that will help describe your proposal or its environmental effects. The agency to which you submit this checklist may ask you to explain your answers or provide additional information reasonably related to determining if there may be significant adverse impact.

### Use of Checklist for Non-Project Proposals:

Complete this checklist for non-project proposals, even though questions may be answered "does not apply." In addition, complete the supplemental sheet for non-project actions (part C).

For non-project actions, the references in the checklist to the words "project," "applicant," and "property or site" should be read as "proposal," "proposer," and "affected geographic area," respectively.

## A Background

- 1 Name of proposed project, if applicable:

**Puget Sound Energy (PSE) Glacier Substation Radio System Upgrade**

- 2 Name of applicant: **Scott Williams, Puget Sound Energy**

Applicant phone number: **425-456-2587**

Applicant address: **PO Box 97034, PSE9N  
Bellevue, WA 98009-9734**

- 3 Contact name: **Scott Williams, Puget Sound Energy**

Contact phone number: **425-456-2587**

Contact address: **PO Box 97034, PSE9N  
Bellevue, WA 98009-9734**

- 4 Date checklist prepared: **November 10, 2011**

- 5 Agency requesting checklist:

**Whatcom County Planning and Development Services**

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

**Construction will commence upon receipt of all applicable permits  
(targeting Spring 2012)**

- 7 Do you have any plans for future additions, expansion, or further activity related to or connected with this proposal? Yes  No

If yes, explain:

**An existing radio site located east of Glacier will be de-commissioned once the new radio system is operational.**

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

**None.**

- 9 Do you know whether applications are pending for governmental approvals of other proposals directly affecting the property covered by your proposal? Yes  No

If yes, explain.

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

**Whatcom County Conditional Use Permit  
Whatcom County Land Disturbance Permit  
SEPA Threshold Determination**

- 11 Give brief, complete description of your proposal, including the proposed uses and the size of the project and site. There are several questions later in this checklist that ask you to describe certain aspects of your proposal. You do not need to repeat those answers on this page. (Lead agencies may modify this form to include additional specific information on project description.)

**The proposal is to replace PSE's existing private land mobile radio system by installing a new 76.5' pole, two antennas, a 12' x 20' pre-manufactured equipment enclosure, backup generator, and two 250-gallon propane tanks within a new 50' x 50' fenced area.**

**The proposal is required to meet FCC mandated frequency narrow banding (the requirement affects all systems operating in the 150-512 MHz frequency range). The radio system is used to meet PSE public service obligations for worker safety, public safety and emergency preparedness and response, including coordination with local, state and federal governments during emergencies.**

- 12 Location of the proposal. Give sufficient information for a person to understand the precise location of your proposed project, including a street address, if any, and section, township, and range, if known. If a proposal would occur over a range of area, provide the range or boundaries of the site(s). Provide a legal description, site plan, vicinity map, and topographic map, if reasonably available. While you should submit any plans required by the agency, you are not required to duplicate maps or detailed plans submitted with any permit applications related to this checklist.

**The proposal is located at 6769 Vaughn Street in Glacier, WA (parcel #390707-395496) in Township 39N, Section 7, Range 7E. It is located adjacent to PSE's existing Glacier Substation.**

**B Environmental Elements**

1 Earth

a. General description of the site:

- Flat
- Rolling
- Hilly
- Steep Slopes
- Mountainous
- Other

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

**The steepest slope on the site is generally less than five percent.**

- 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 prime farmland.

**Based on the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Web Soil Survey, the soils on the site are Barneston gravelly loam.**

- d. Are there surface indications or history of unstable soils in the immediate vicinity? Yes  No

If so, describe.

**Not applicable.**

- e. Describe the purpose, type, and approximate quantities of any filling or grading proposed.

**Grading and fill activity will be limited to grading for installation of the fenced enclosure, including removal of an existing foundation wall (approximately 45 square feet) and fill to provide a level construction area. Additional fill will be added to elevate the equipment shelter above grade in consideration of potential snow conditions. Approximately 200 cubic yards of existing soils will be excavated and 230 cubic yards will be used for fill.**

**Fill materials (general fill, crushed rock, etc.) will be obtained from a licensed pit as close as possible to the site.**

- f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

**Minimal erosion in the construction area could occur during grading of the site. Temporary erosion control measures will be used, as necessary, to control any short-term erosion impacts and prevent sediment from leaving the site.**

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

**Approximately 1.2 percent of the site (400 square feet) will be covered with impervious surface. This will primarily include foundations for the generator and propane tanks and the equipment enclosure.**

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

**A conceptual erosion control plan is included with the Conditional Use Permit submittal documents. A final plan will be provided for the site as part of the construction permitting. BMPs such as silt fencing, marking clearing limits and minimizing cleared area, orange safety fencing, and temporary diversion swales consistent with the DOE Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington will be used during construction.**

2. Air

- a. What types of emissions to the air would result from the proposal (i.e., dust, automobile, odors, or industrial wood smoke) during construction and when the project is completed?

If any, generally describe and give approximate quantities if known.

**Minor short-term emissions will occur during construction from construction equipment and dust.**

- b. Are there any off-site sources of emissions or odor that may affect your proposal?    Yes     No

If so, generally describe.

**Not applicable.**

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

**There are no anticipated impacts to air.**

3. Water

- a. Surface:

- (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)?    Yes     No

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

**Not applicable.**

- (2) Will the project require any work over, in, or adjacent to (within 200 feet) the described waters? Yes  No

If yes, please describe and attach available plans.

**Not applicable.**

- (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.

**No filling or dredging will occur as part of this project.**

- (4) Will the proposal require surface water withdrawals or diversions? Yes  No

Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

**No surface water withdrawals or diversions will occur as a result of this project.**

Does the proposal lie within a 100-year floodplain? Yes  No

If so, note location on the site plan.

**Not applicable.**

- (5) Does the proposal involve any discharges of waste materials to surface waters? Yes  No

If so, describe the type of waste and anticipated volume of discharge

**Not applicable.**

b. Ground

Will ground water be withdrawn, or will water be discharged to ground water? Yes  No

Give general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

**Not applicable.**



- (1) Describe waste material that will be discharged into the ground from septic tanks or other sources, if any (for example: Domestic sewage; industrial, containing the following chemicals.....; agricultural; etc.). Describe the general size of the system, the number of such systems, the number of houses to be served (if applicable), or the number of animals or humans the system(s) are expected to serve.

**No waste material will be discharged into the ground as a result of this project.**

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).

**Minor stormwater runoff will result from the proposed radio project, including roof drainage from the equipment shelter.**

Where will this water flow?

**Runoff will be allowed to percolate through the yard rock and into the onsite soils. The onsite soils are shown as Barneston Gravelly Loam by the SCS/NRCS mapping. This soil unit is well drained with a high capacity to transmit water. According to NRCS, the most limiting layers allow infiltration at 0.57 to 1.98 inches/hour. "Upstream" flows entering the site will be intercepted by an interceptor swale on the south side of the enclosure, directed around the improved area and allowed to infiltrate on the undeveloped portion of the subject property.**

Will this water flow into other waters? Yes  No

If so, describe.

**Not applicable.**

- (2) Could waste materials enter ground or surface waters?  
Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

**Not applicable.**

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

**Impacts from water runoff will be minimal. During and after construction, stormwater runoff will be direct to an interceptor swale and allowed to infiltrate flow on the existing undeveloped, forested area on the subject property.**

4 Plants

a. Check 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
- 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?

**No vegetation will be removed or altered as part of this proposal, except for groundcover in the location of the proposed improvements. There is a heavy layer of leaf litter interspersed with ferns, mosses and vines in this area.**

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

**No endangered species are known to be 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:

**No significant vegetation will be removed or altered as part of this proposal.**

5. Animals

a. Check any birds and animals, which have been observed on or near the site or are known to be on or near the site:

Birds:

- Hawk,
- Eagle,
- Other:
- Heron,
- Songbirds;

Mammals:

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deer, | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear,   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elk,             | <input type="checkbox"/> Beaver; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:           |                                  |

Fish:

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bass,      | <input type="checkbox"/> Salmon,  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trout,     | <input type="checkbox"/> Herring, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish; | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |

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

**None.**

- c. Is the site part of a migration route?      Yes       No

If so, explain.

**Not applicable.**

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

**None.**

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.

**The project will require electrical power and will be served from the adjacent substation. A backup generator will be onsite and will be fueled using propane gas.**

- b. Would your project affect the potential use of solar energy by adjacent properties?      Yes       No

If so, generally describe.

**Not applicable.**

- 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:

**The new radio equipment will be more energy efficient than the system it will be replacing.**

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 as a result of this proposal? Yes  No

If so, describe.

**Not applicable.**

- (1) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

**No special emergency services are anticipated to be required as part of this proposal.**

- (2) Proposed measures to reduce or control environmental health hazards, if any:

**None.**

b. Noise

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

**No noise within the area will impact the proposed project.**

- (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.

**Short-term noise impacts will occur from equipment during construction. Long-term impacts will include low level noise from the air conditioning units on the equipment shelter and occasional noise from the emergency generator. The noise levels will comply with state noise level standards under Chapter 173-60 WAC.**

- (3) Proposed measures to reduce or control noise impacts, if any:

**None.**

8 Land and Shoreline Use

- a. What is the current use of the site and adjacent properties?

**The site is currently vacant. Uses on adjacent properties include a PSE electrical distribution substation to the north, single-family residential to the east, and vacant forested sites to the west and south.**

- b. Has the site been used for agriculture? Yes  No   
If so, describe.

**Not applicable.**

- c. Describe any structures on the site.

**There are no existing structures on the site.**

- d. Will any structures be demolished? Yes  No   
If so, what?

**Not applicable.**

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

**The current zoning of the site is Rural Residential, 1 unit/acre (RR-1).**

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

**The Comprehensive Plan designation for the site is Rural.**

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

**Not applicable.**

- h. Has any part of the site been classified as an "environmentally sensitive" area? Yes  No   
If so, specify.

**Not applicable.**

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

**No one will reside or work in the completed project.**

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

**The completed project will not displace anyone.**

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

**None.**

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

**The proposed use is in support of the adjacent electrical substation and the provision of electric service and emergency response to residents of the County. The site will be screened with existing vegetation from adjacent sites and land uses.**

9 Housing

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

**No housing units will be provided.**

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

**No housing units will be eliminated.**

- High
- Middle
- Low-income

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

**None.**

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?

**The proposed wood pole will be 76.5 feet in height, similar to existing power poles at the adjacent substation. The equipment enclosure will be concrete. All equipment will be screened by existing vegetation from adjacent non-utility properties.**

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

**No views in the immediate vicinity will be altered or obstructed.**

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

**The existing site screening will be maintained.**

## 11 Light and Glare

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

**The proposal will not produce light or glare.**

- b. Could light or glare from the finished project be a safety hazard or interfere with views?

**The proposal will not produce light or glare, therefore there will not be any safety hazards or interference with views.**

- c. What existing off-site sources of light or glare may affect your proposal?

**No off-site sources of light or glare will affect the proposal.**

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

**None.**

## 12 Recreation

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

**None.**

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

**The project will not displace any existing recreational uses.**

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

**None.**

## 13 Historic and Cultural Preservation

- a. Are there any places or objects listed on, or proposed for, national, state, or local preservation registers known to be on or next to the site? If so, generally describe.

**No.**

- b. Generally describe any landmarks or evidence of historic, archaeological, scientific, or cultural importance known to be on or next to the site.

**Not applicable.**

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

**None.**

#### 14 Transportation

- a. Identify public streets and highways serving the site, and describe proposed access to the existing street system. Show on site plans, if any.

**The site is served by Vaughn Street and Railroad Avenue and is accessed through the substation property to the north.**

- b. Is site currently served by public transit? Yes  No   
If not, what is the approximate distance to the nearest transit stop?

**The nearest transit stop is in Kendall, approximately 12 miles west of Glacier.**

- c. How many parking spaces would the completed project have? How many would the project eliminate?

**The completed project will have two parking spaces. No parking spaces will be eliminated.**

- d. Will the proposal require any new roads or streets, or improvements to existing roads or streets, not including driveways? Yes  No   
If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

**Not applicable.**

- e. Will the project use (or occur in the immediate vicinity of)

- Water,  
 Rail, or  
 Air transportation?

If so, generally describe.

**The project will not use or occur in the vicinity of any of these modes of transportation.**

- f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur.

**The project will not generate vehicle trips.**

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

**None.**



15 Public Services

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

Yes  No

If so, generally describe.

**Not applicable.**

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

**None.**

16 Utilities

- a. Check utilities currently available at the site:

Electricity,

Water,

Telephone,

Septic system,

Natural gas,

Refuse service,

Sanitary sewer,

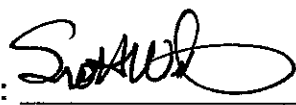
Other.

- 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.

**Electricity – Puget Sound Energy**

**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.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: 11-21-11

### **C Supplemental Sheet for Non-project Actions**

*(Do not use this sheet for project actions)*

Because these questions are very general, it may be helpful to read them in conjunction with the list of the elements of the environment. When answering these questions, be aware of the extent the proposal or the types of activities likely to result from the proposal, would affect the item at a greater intensity or at a faster rate than if the proposal were not implemented. Respond briefly and in general terms.

- 1 How would the proposal be likely to increase discharge to water; emissions to air; production, storage, or release of toxic or hazardous substances; or production of noise?

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

2. How would the proposal be likely to affect plants, animals, fish, or marine life?

Proposed measures to protect or conserve plants, animals, fish, or marine life are:

3. How would the proposal be likely to deplete energy or natural resources?

Proposed measures to protect or conserve energy and natural resources are:

4. How would the proposal be likely to use or affect environmentally sensitive areas or areas designated (or eligible or under study) for governmental protection; such as parks, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, threatened or endangered species habitat, historic or cultural sites, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands?

Proposed measures to protect such resources or to avoid or reduce impacts are:

5. How would the proposal be likely to affect land and shoreline use, including whether it would allow or encourage land or shoreline uses incompatible with existing plans?

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce shoreline and land use impacts are:

6. How would the proposal be likely to increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities?

Proposed measures to reduce or respond to such demand(s) are:

7. Identify, if possible, whether the proposal may conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.