

EXHIBIT E

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Determination of Non-Significance

July 10, 2024

Lead Agency: Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17

Agency Contact: Fire Chief Matt Medford

Agency File Number: Not Applicable

Description of Proposal: Proposed merger of Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17 into Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 23.

Location of Proposal: Jurisdictional areas of Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17 and Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 23

Applicant: Pierce Fire Protection District No. 17
Fire Chief Matt Medford
PO Box 842
Elbe, WA 98330
matt.medford@pcfd23.org
360-569-2752


Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 17 has determined that this proposal will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). We have reviewed the attached Environmental Checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

This determination is based on the following findings and conclusions:

Proposed merger will primarily only adjust the jurisdictional boundaries of the Fire Districts. The proposed merger is a non-project action that will not involve construction, development of a physical site or alterations to the physical environment.

This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2) and the comment period will end on :
July 10, 2024.

Responsible Official: Fire Chief Matt Medford
Address: PO Box 842, Elbe, WA 98330
Telephone Number: 360-569-2752
Email Address: matt.medford@pcfd23.org

Signature: 

Date: July 10, 2024

Appeal process: There is no agency appeal.

SEPA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

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

Instructions for applicants:

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

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

Instructions for Lead Agencies:

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

Use of checklist for non-project proposals:

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

A. BACKGROUND

1. Name of proposed project, if applicable:

Proposed merger of Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17 (“District 17”) into Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 23 (“District 23”)

2. Name of applicant:

Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17 (“District 17”)

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

**Fire Chief Matt Medford
PO Box 842
Elbe, WA 98330
(360) 569-2752**

4. Date checklist prepared:

June 26, 2024

5. Agency requesting checklist:

Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17 (“District 17”)

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

The proposed merger of the District 17 into District 23 (collectively referred to herein as the “Fire Districts”) is anticipated to occur in late 2024, pending a citizen vote on a ballot to merge the Fire Districts, likely at the general election in 2024. The proposed merger may be delayed to a subsequent ballot as needed.

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

No. The Fire Districts are generally open to further consolidation. However, the Fire Districts have no specific plans for additions, expansions, or further activity related to the merger.

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? If yes, explain.

No.

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

District 17 has already petitioned District 23, and District 23 has accepted the petition. The approval of the Lewis County Boundary Review Board is required. Vote of the citizens of District 17 to merge is required.

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.)

Proposed merger of District 17 into District 23. See attached District 17 petition for merger.

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.

This proposal would affect the properties within the jurisdiction of District 17 and District 23. See attached maps.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

1. EARTH

a. General description of the site:

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

No development is occurring as a result of this non-project action. The non-project action involves the area of the Districts, and to the extent that area is the site, the topography varies.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

No filling, excavation or grading is proposed as this is a non-project action.

f. Could erosion occur as a result of clearing, construction, or use? If so, generally describe.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

No construction or development is occurring as a result of this non-project action. To the extent a response is needed to this question for a non-project action, the merger will result in some changes in vehicle travel between the Fire Districts, but any change in emissions will have a negligible effect on air quality.

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

No.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable as this is a non-project action. The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts, and to the extent that area is the site, there are several

surface water bodies which are shown on the enclosed maps in response to question A12 of this Checklist.

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.

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 fill material will be used and no dredging will occur.

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

No surface water withdrawals or diversions are planned.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts, which include areas that lie within the 100-year floodplain, but no development or construction is proposed within any of these areas as a result of this non-project action.

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 discharge of waste materials is anticipated with this non-project action.

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 general description, purpose, and approximate quantities if known.

No groundwater will be withdrawn for this non-project action.

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

No waste material will be discharged into the ground or other sources as a result of this non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

The non-project action does not alter or affect drainage.

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

Not applicable as this is a non-project action.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts, which include several types of vegetation. But there is no site being developed or construction proposed that would impact the vegetation as a result of this non-project action.

b. What kind and amount of vegetation will be removed or altered?

None.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts, there are likely threatened and endangered species within these areas, but no development is planned that would remove these species and no impacts are anticipated as a result of this non-project action.

d. Proposed landscaping, use of native plants, or other measures to preserve or enhance

vegetation on the site, if any:

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts. There are likely invasive species in this general area but are not impacted by this non-project action.

5. ANIMALS

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

Examples include:

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

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

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts. Animals within that area include hawks, heron, eagles, songbirds, deer, beaver, other small mammals, bass, salmon, and trout.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species data was reviewed on October 15, 2020 for the areas covered by the Fire Districts which identified the following species: purple martin, chinook salmon, Rainbow Trout, Sockeye, Coho, Fall Chinook, steelhead, Kokanee, resident coastal cutthroat, winter steelhead, Dolly Varden / Bull Trout, pileated woodpecker, Great Blue Heron, and little brown bat.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts. There are likely threatened and endangered species within these areas, but no development is planned that would affect habitat and no impacts are anticipated as a result of this non-project action.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts, which is in the Pacific Flyway.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

The non-project action involves the area of the Fire Districts. There are likely invasive species in this general area but are not impacted by this non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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 proposed for this non-project action.

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? If so, describe.

None anticipated.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable as this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

4) Describe special emergency services that might be required.

None anticipated.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

b. Noise

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

No noise effects.

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.

The merger of the Fire Districts is a non-project action that itself will not create any new noise. Fire and emergency vehicle sirens will continue to be used when the Fire Districts respond to emergency calls, but little to no additional siren use is anticipated as a result of the merger.

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? Will the proposal affect current land uses on nearby or adjacent properties? If so, describe.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

c. Describe any structures on the site.

Fire stations and related office space are located throughout the Fire Districts. No change in these structures is planned as part of this non-project action.

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

No.

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

District 17 is zoned Rural Residential 2 ,Rural 20, and Forrest Land. District 23 is zoned Rural 10, Rural 40, Tourist Commercial, Village Residential, Village Center, Agricultural Resource Land, Forrest Land. The proposed merger of District 17 into District 23 has no impact on zoning.

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

The Fire Districts includes both residential, rural, and forrested areas.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

9. HOUSING

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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?

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

11. LIGHT AND GLARE

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

The merger of the Fire Districts is a non-project action that itself will not create any new light or glare. Fire and emergency vehicle lights will continue to be used when the Fire Districts respond to emergency calls, but little to no additional light usage is anticipated as a result of the merger.

- 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?

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

12. RECREATION

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

Hiking, biking, boating, fishing, walking, park usage, lake, and river recreation, etc.

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

No.

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

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

No change of access or impacts to use are anticipated for this non-project action.

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?

None.

c. How many additional parking spaces would the completed project or non-project proposal have? How many would the project or proposal eliminate?

No change.

d. Will the proposal require any new or improvements to existing roads, streets, pedestrian, bicycle, or state transportation facilities, not including driveways? If so, generally describe (indicate whether public or private).

Not Applicable

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

No.

f. How many vehicular trips per day would be generated by the completed project or proposal? If known, indicate when peak volumes would occur and what percentage of the volume would be trucks (such as commercial and non-passenger vehicles). What data or transportation models were used to make these estimates?

This non-project action may create a few additional daily trips between the consolidated Fire Districts' stations, but these additional trips, if any, are not anticipated to create any significant adverse impacts to traffic.

g. Will the proposal interfere with, affect or be affected by the movement of agricultural and forest products on roads or streets in the area? If so, generally describe.

None anticipated.

h. 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, public transit, health care, schools, other)? If so, generally describe.

No.

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

None necessary. Approval of the proposed merger will reduce or control direct impacts on public services within the areas served by the Fire Districts.

16. UTILITIES

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


Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Not applicable for this is a non-project action.

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.

Signature: 

Name of signee: **Matt Medford**

Position and Agency/Organization: **Fire Chief, Lewis County Fire Protection District No. 17**

Date Submitted: **June 26, 2024**

D. SUPPLEMENTAL SHEET FOR NON-PROJECT ACTIONS

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?

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not likely increase discharges, emissions, production of noise, or the production, storage or release of toxic or hazardous substances. The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will create efficiencies in operations and response times, likely resulting in a decrease in the above effects.

Proposed measures to avoid or reduce such increases are:

None.

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

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not likely affect plants, animals, fish or marine life.

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

None.

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

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not likely deplete energy or natural resources.

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

None.

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?

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not likely use or affect environmentally sensitive areas, or areas designated for government protection.

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

None.

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?

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not likely affect land or shoreline use in a manner incompatible with existing uses or plans.

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

None.

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

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not likely increase demands on transportation or public services and utilities. Rather, the proposed merger of the Fire Districts will likely create efficiencies in public services, reducing demands on existing operations of the two separate Fire Districts.

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

None.

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

The proposed merger of the Fire Districts will not conflict with local, state, or federal laws or requirements for the protection of the environment.