



State of Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
Southwest Region 5 • 5525 South 11<sup>th</sup> St Ridgefield, WA 98642  
Telephone: (360) 696-6211 • Fax: (360) 906-6776

September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Lewis County Community Development  
2025 NE Kresky Ave  
Chehalis, WA 98532

Dear Preston Pinkston:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the **Welsh Shoreline Variance** project. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed this application and offers the following comments for your consideration.

**We reviewed the proposed shoreline variance request and support the mitigation efforts outlined in the No Net Loss Mitigation Plan: “to enhance 2,082 sq ft of shoreline buffer at a 1:1 enhancement to impact ratio.” However, we want to highlight that this parcel is identified as having a Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) occurrence that supports Nisqually Deer and Elk concentrations.** In most areas, deer and elk summer ranges are on public lands, whereas winter ranges largely are on private lands. Deer/elk likely use this area year-round with higher concentrations during winter months.

WDFW recognizes balancing development needs with preserving wildlife habitat. **Since this project directly impacts deer and elk winter range, it is critical to understand the ecological impacts prior to approving development so the project adequately follows the mitigation sequence as outlined in LCC 17.38.080(2).** Potential best management practices that avoid and minimize impacts include, but are not limited to:

- Prohibiting fencing that elk/deer cannot cross.
- Retaining forested areas within the parcel.
- Reducing (or clustering) homes within the parcel.
- Enhancing other elk/deer habitat in immediate area.

Developing within the area may lead to an increase in conflict, including damage to agricultural crops and vehicle collisions. The likelihood of human/elk/deer conflicts is influenced by the number of deer/elk in the area, availability of alternative food sources, protective cover, and winter weather conditions. **If deer/elk are damaging your property, personnel from your local Fish and Wildlife office can help you evaluate damage-control options.** Additional information on fencing and interacting with elk can be found at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/species/cervus-canadensis>.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Please contact me should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elliot Johnson".

Elliot Johnson, Habitat Biologist  
Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife