



**File Code:** 1950

**Date:** January 29, 2014

**Subject:** Proposed Little Sandy Creek Fish Barrier Replacement Project

Dear Forest User:

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Mount Baker Ranger District (MBRD), is inviting public comment on a forthcoming project that will take place on National Forest System (NFS) lands. This project would replace three stream crossings (culverts) that are barriers to fish passage on Forest Service Road (FSR) 1100, also known as the Baker Lake Highway and FSR 1123 (Figure 1). Existing stream crossing structures would be replaced with structures (e.g., pipe, culvert, bridge, or box culvert) that would allow passage of aquatic organisms between Baker Lake and upstream Coho salmon and coastal cutthroat trout rearing and spawning habitat in the Little Sandy Creek drainage. The project would occur between September and November 2014. Full closure of Baker Lake Highway, at Mile Post (MP) 17, is anticipated to take place for up to 5 days between October 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and 3 days between October 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The Boulder Cr. Campground Road (FSR 1128) will be open to administrative access only between September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> (Figure 1).

**Location:** The project is located approximately 24 miles northeast of Sedro-Woolley, Washington (Figure 1) in Section 7, T37N, R9E, W.M. in Whatcom County, Washington. The sites are near MP 17.4 and 17.9 on Baker Lake Highway, and MP 0.9 on FSR 1123.

### **Background, Purpose and Need, and Proposed Action**

**Background:** During surveys conducted in 2012, the existing stream crossing structures were observed to be perched above the streambed and determined to be barriers to upstream rearing and spawning habitat for known Coho salmon and coastal cutthroat trout populations in the Little Sandy Creek drainage (Figures 2 and 3).

**Need:** There is a need for meeting three objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy of the MBS Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended (LRMP 1994):

1. Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features
2. Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds and,
3. Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system (LRMP 1994; p. B-11).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to improve aquatic organism passage between Baker Lake and upstream Coho salmon and coastal cutthroat trout rearing and spawning habitat in the Little Sandy Creek drainage.

**Proposed Action:** The proposed action is to replace three existing culverts currently functioning as barriers to fish passage (Figures 2 and 3) with structures that would provide aquatic organism passage between Baker Lake and upstream Coho salmon and coastal cutthroat trout rearing and spawning habitat.



The proposed action would be achieved by:

- replacing 3 drainage structures that meet Q 100 flows and Aquatic Organism Passage requirements at sites 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 1) on Baker Lake Highway and FSR 1123 and
- constructing channels with the width, slope, and substrate as similar as possible to the adjacent natural channel in both structure and function.

**How to Comment and Timeframe:** The Proposed Action falls within a category of actions that are excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement under 36 CFR 220.6 (d) (4): “*Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries.*” There are no identified extraordinary circumstances related to the Proposed Action that may lead to significant effects. This category of action is not subject to notice, comment, and appeal.

As part of the environmental process required by the National Environmental Policy Act, I am inviting those who may be interested in the proposed project to provide comments on the scope of analysis and issues to be addressed for the proposed project. Comments should be in the form of specific issues raised by the action as proposed. Your comments would be most helpful if received by March 15, 2014.

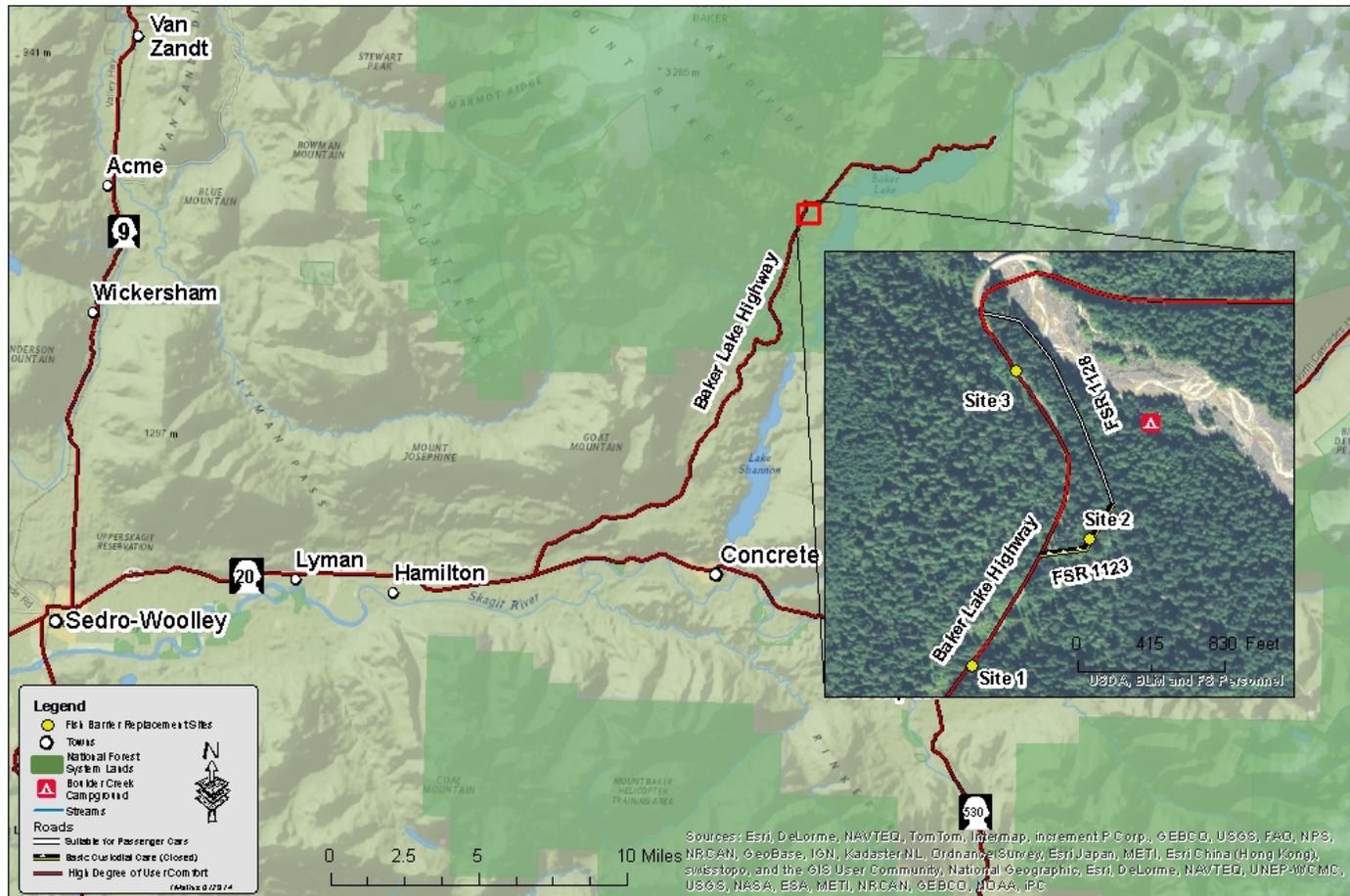
Comments may be written or electronic. If you choose to provide written comments, please submit them to Erin Uloth, District Ranger, Attn: Little Sandy Creek Fish Barrier Replacement Project, Mt Baker Ranger District, 810 State Route 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284. Comments may also be sent by fax to (360) 856-1934, or by email to [tjmathis@fs.fed.us](mailto:tjmathis@fs.fed.us). Electronic comments should be in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), portable document format (.pdf), or Word (.doc or .docx) and should include “Little Sandy Creek Fish Barrier Replacement” in the subject line. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments received in response to this invitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the Project Record and available for public review. The Responsible Official is Erin Uloth, District Ranger. For further information regarding this project, please contact Jeremy Gilman, Project Leader, North Zone Fish Biologist, Mt. Baker Ranger District, at (360) 854-2633, e-mail [jmgilman@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmgilman@fs.fed.us) or Theresa Mathis, Environmental Coordinator at (360) 854-2632, email [tjmaths@fs.fed.us](mailto:tjmaths@fs.fed.us).

We appreciate your continued interest in the management of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Sincerely,

ERIN ULOTH  
District Ranger

Enclosures



## Little Sandy Creek Fish Barrier Replacement

Figure 1



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 K4 Baker Ranger District Office at 360-358-0700.  
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Figure 1. Vicinity map and barrier replacement sites of the Little Sandy Creek Fish Barrier Replacement Project.



Figure 2. Existing culvert at Site #2 on south Boulder Creek Road.



Figure 3. Existing culvert at Site #3 on Baker Lake Highway.