

TEANAWAY COMMUNITY FOREST



Summary management plan for water supply and watershed protection

The Yakima Basin is one of the most diverse and ecologically rich areas in Washington. Water from the basin supports not only growing communities and a vital agricultural industry but also a variety of fish and wildlife species.

However, chronic water shortages in the Yakima Basin prompted a statewide coalition to develop the Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Plan. The plan provides the framework for enhancing the basin's water supply and associated habitat.

A key step in this multi-year plan was the purchase of the 50,241 acres that make up the Teanaway Community Forest. Located at the headwaters of the Yakima Basin, the Teanaway River system presents an important opportunity to restore some of the best fish spawning and rearing areas in the basin, critical to the recovery of federally protected steelhead and bull trout.

The state Legislature approved the Teanaway lands acquisition and basin plan in 2013. The Washington departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are working together to carry out the Legislature's directive to *protect and enhance the water supply and protect the watershed*.

Currently, the level of water flowing through the Yakima Basin and the Teanaway often drops during summer months, disconnecting streams. Eroded stream banks, high levels of sediment and a lack of streamside vegetation also afflict portions of the Teanaway watershed.

More runoff is occurring earlier in the year than it did historically in the watershed. Restoring natural functions, such as floodplains, will slow runoff and result in more water being available in the summer, when demand from irrigators intensifies. More water flowing through the Teanaway later in the year also will benefit fish populations.

To address these problems, the departments and the advisory committee have outlined the need to:

- Increase the quantity of water flowing through the Teanaway – particularly in late summer – to keep streams connected, which is critical for fish migration, rearing and spawning.
- Enhance the forest's water storage capacity and snowpack retention.
- Devise road and trail networks that help reduce runoff, which will improve water quality and increase the amount of water flowing through the forest later in the summer.
- Expand WDFW's existing efforts to relocate beavers into the Teanaway, where their dams help store water and improve habitat.
- Increase the quantity and quality of riverbed and streamside habitat in the forest.
- Improve water quality by minimizing damage to streams from activities such as grazing, timber harvest and recreation.



For more information: www.dnr.wa.gov/teanaway

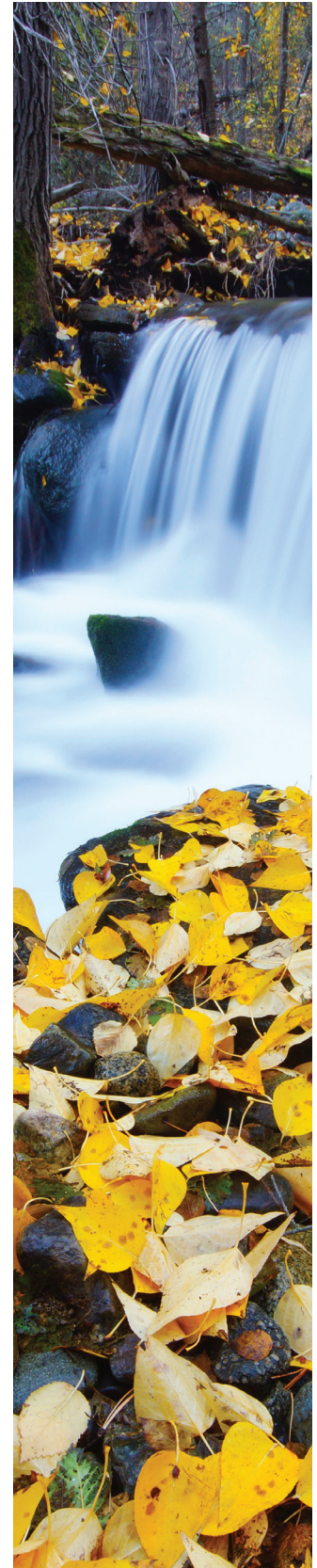


Photo by Justin Haug

Summary of draft plan for working lands

The Teanaway Community Forest property historically has been a working landscape providing timber and rangeland for cattle and sheep. The Washington departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are working together to carry out the Legislature's directive to: *maintain working lands for forestry and domestic livestock grazing while protecting key watershed functions and aquatic habitat.*

Forestry

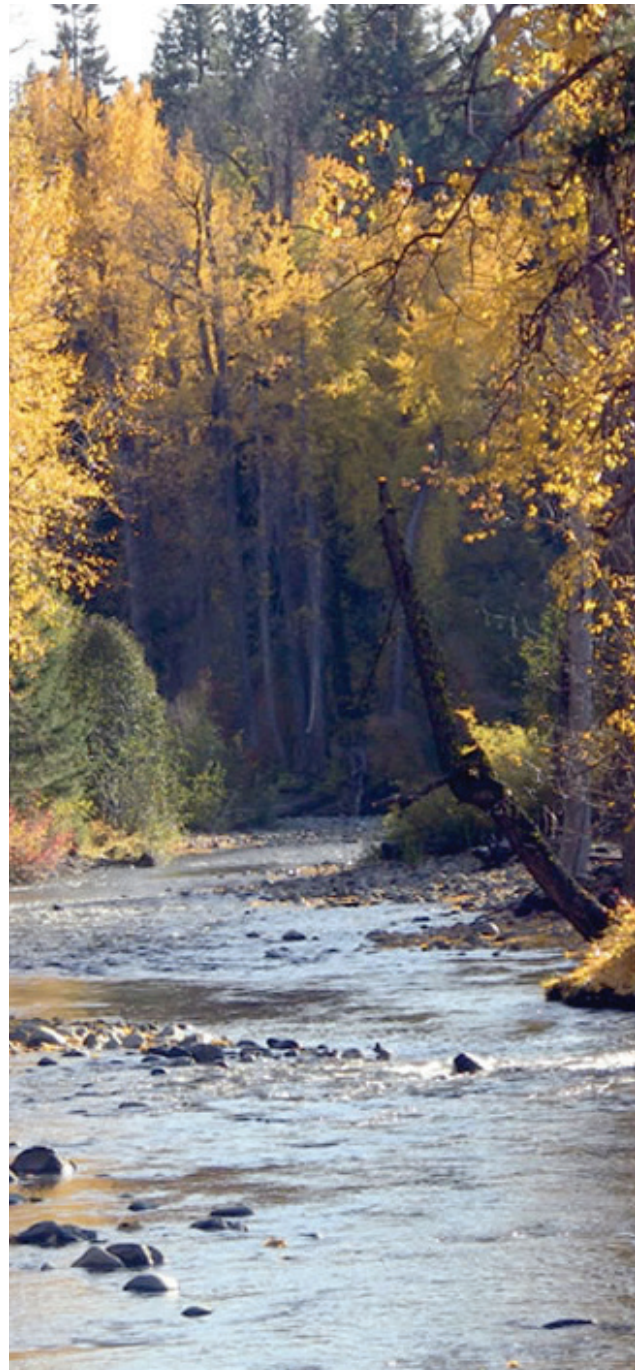
A working landscape consists of productive, sustainable lands. The Teanaway Community Forest is not required to generate income to fund operations and maintenance, allowing the focus to be on sustainable timber practices that benefit the watershed, wildlife and their habitats, forest health and the local economy.

Historically, the Teanaway forest was a mosaic of open spaces, ponderosa pine, western larches and mixed-species fir trees. Over the years, and particularly in the past century, industrial timber production, unmanaged grazing, and the suppression of natural fires have altered the forest's vegetation. Today, the forest has fewer old and mature trees and less structural diversity than it previously did.

Outbreaks of insects – such as the western spruce budworm, which feeds predominately on fir trees – have killed many trees in the region over the last decade. This adds to the risk of severe wildfires, as do hotter, lengthier summers. Although fire plays a role in the natural ecosystem, it can pose a threat to water quality, wildlife habitat and neighboring communities.

Healthy wildlife habitat, functioning streams and sustainable timber harvests are possible under an active management plan that also would reduce the risk of fire and insect outbreaks. To achieve this, DNR, WDFW and the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee have outlined the need to:

- Actively manage the forest to enhance and maintain wildlife habitat for a diversity of species by selecting the type of forest conditions most appropriate for the site.
- Conduct forest management to reduce the risk of wildfires and severe insect outbreaks and sustainably harvest timber to support the local economy.
- Increase habitat for the Northern spotted owl by managing across the broader landscape.
- Improve snowpack accumulation and retention.
- Communicate with neighbors on land management practices that would help to reduce risk of fires and insect outbreaks in the region and connect important wildlife habitat.



Grazing

The lands of the Teanaway Community Forest have supported domestic livestock operations since the 1880s, if not earlier. The Legislature intended this historic use to continue while also protecting watershed health.

Historically, cattle and sheep both grazed the Teanaway in large numbers. The intensity of grazing has slowly dwindled over the past century. Today, three operators move cattle into the area in June and remove them in October.

Unmanaged grazing can harm fish and wildlife habitat when livestock are allowed to trample through streams and denude streamside vegetation. Managed properly, grazing can provide an economic return for land managers and operators without damaging the watershed or wildlife habitat.

To achieve this, DNR, WDFW and the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee have outlined the need to:

- Minimize the damage to fish and wildlife habitat by adjusting the duration, frequency, location, and timing of livestock grazing.
- Control livestock access to salmon spawning habitat and habitat-restoration areas.
- Implement practices to deter wildlife, such as cougars and wolves, from preying on livestock.
- Protect watershed health by implementing protective measures, such as livestock-monitoring and fencing of key areas.
- Manage grazing to a high standard of sustainability so that vegetation continues to grow, helping reduce the risk of wildfire and spread of invasive plants.



For more information: www.dnr.wa.gov/teanaway

TEANAWAY COMMUNITY FOREST



Summary of draft objectives for recreation

Recreational opportunities abound in the Teanaway Community Forest. Hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders flock to the forest to take in views of the lush Teanaway valley and scenic rivers. Users can connect to National Forest system trails, which offer opportunities for motorized recreation. The area's wildlife and fish populations draw hunters and anglers as well as wildlife watchers. Three campgrounds serve numerous campers and groomed trails attract snowmobilers in winter.

The state purchased the forest property in 2013 primarily to help with efforts to preserve the watershed and improve the water supply for the Yakima Basin. Therefore, the Washington departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), are working together to carry out the Legislature's directive to *maintain and where possible expand recreational opportunities consistent with watershed protection, for activities such as hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, birding and snowmobiling.*

Dozens of unapproved user-made trails crisscross the community forest, often cutting through vital wildlife habitat or running alongside or through streams. Using such trails can diminish water quality and harm habitat, and needs to be addressed.

The community forest management plan, due in June, will include a framework for recreation that reflects the conservation directive from the Legislature. Criteria laid out in the management plan will be used later to evaluate recreational options in a more detailed recreation plan. So far, no decision has been made on how – or whether – to accommodate motorcycle trails.

The departments and the advisory committee have developed recommendations that include:

- Developing a recreation plan for the forest that addresses the locations of trails and facilities.
- Providing and maintaining a network of recreation trails. This would include designating trails for specific uses and improving, relocating or removing the existing network of user-created trails to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, lower maintenance needs, and improve user safety and experiences.
- Renovating and maintaining facilities, including campgrounds; establishing new trailheads; and providing access for people with disabilities.
- Accommodating dispersed recreation activities such as hunting, fishing, nature viewing, backcountry pack-in experiences, geocaching, and orienteering events.
- Managing river access and educating the public on how to recreate in and along the river without damaging fish habitat and water quality.
- Establishing partnerships with non-profit organizations – including volunteer, community and recreation groups – for maintenance, education, and restoration activities in the forest.
- Consistently communicating forest regulations and principles through public outreach and enforcement efforts.



TEANAWAY COMMUNITY FOREST



Summary of draft plan for fish and wildlife

The Teanaway Community Forest is home to many fish and wildlife species. The Washington departments of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Natural Resources (DNR) are working together to carry out the Legislature's directive to: *conserve and restore vital habitat for fish, including steelhead, spring chinook, and bull trout; and wildlife, including deer, elk, large predators, and spotted owls.*

Fish

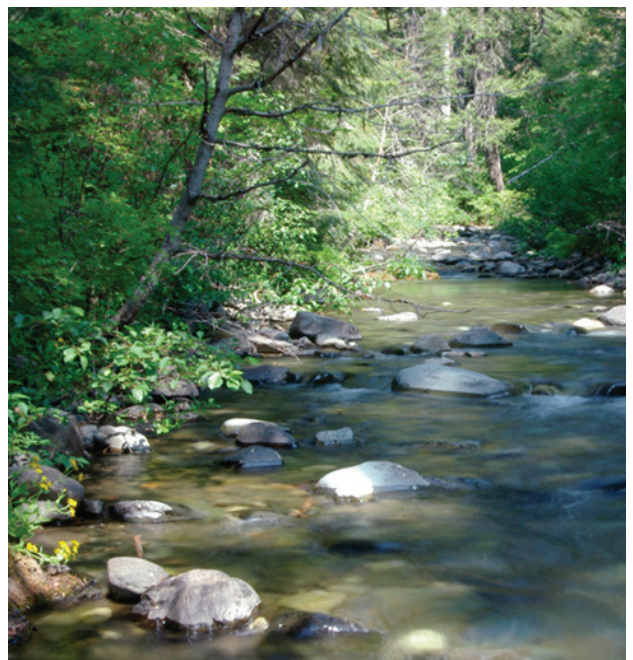
The community forest includes large sections of all three forks of the Teanaway River and several smaller tributary streams, all of which connect to the Yakima River. Spring chinook, steelhead and bull trout were once abundant in Teanaway watershed. But populations have declined to the extent that steelhead and bull trout are federally protected in the watershed.

To thrive, salmon and trout need streams with cold, clean water and deep pools. However, the abundance of fish populations has been limited in the Teanaway watershed due to low flows, higher water temperatures, eroded stream banks and a lack of streamside vegetation.

WDFW, DNR and the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee are discussing several ideas for improving aquatic habitat and increasing fish populations. All of these options would focus on improving the health of the ecosystem and enhancing sport fishing opportunities, which would contribute to the region's economy. DNR, WDFW and the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee have outlined the need to:

- Increase the quantity of water flowing through the Teanaway – particularly in late summer – to keep streams connected and reduce water temperatures.
- Devise road and trail systems that protect streams and streamside vegetation and improve water quality.
- Pursue a stable funding mechanism to provide for adequate enforcement of DNR and WDFW's rules to protect the public, fish, wildlife and habitat.
- Remove or replace culverts that prevent fish from swimming upstream to spawn.
- Expand WDFW's existing efforts to relocate beavers into the Teanaway, where their dams help store water and improve fish habitat.
- Minimize damage to water quality or fish habitat that can be caused by activities such as grazing, timber harvest and recreation.

The agencies and the advisory committee have agreed to prioritize projects in sections of rivers that support threatened and endangered fish species or that will have the most impact on improving fish habitat.



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Wildlife

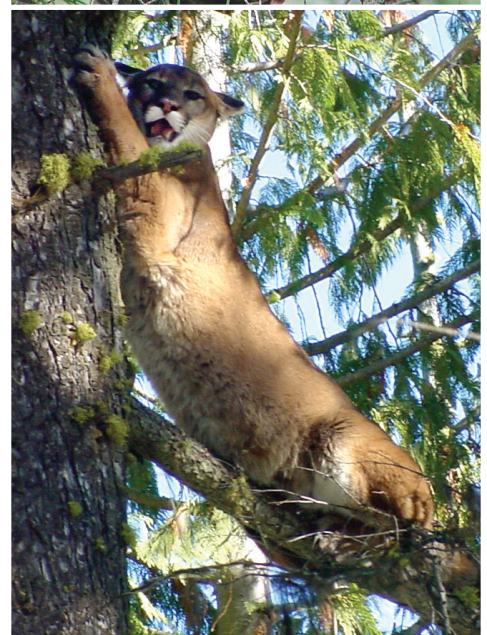
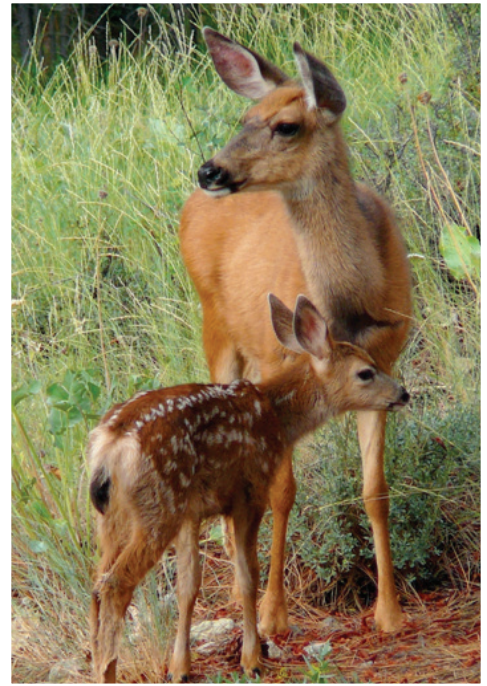
The Teanaway Community Forest supports black bear and cougar populations and represents the core range of the Teanaway wolf pack. These animals thrive because of the forest's diverse habitat and abundant prey, including mule deer and elk. Trapping and poisoning in the early 1900s eliminated the forest's native wolf population and significantly reduced cougar numbers. Today, decades after bounties were removed, the cougar population has rebounded and wolves have started to recolonize the Teanaway.

Elk in the forest are members of the larger Colockum herd, which is prized by both hunters and wildlife-watchers. Hunters typically harvest more deer in the Teanaway game management unit than any other unit in the south central Washington region, reflecting the Teanaway's quality deer habitat.

However, not all wildlife are faring well in the Teanaway. The region historically provided key spotted owl habitat, connecting populations to the north and south. Over the past several decades, spotted owl habitat has been lost due to fires, insect outbreaks and excessive timber harvest. Only a few spotted owl sites remain in the forest.

To conserve and restore vital habitat for all wildlife in the Teanaway, the departments and the advisory committee have outlined the need to:

- Increase, manage and maintain habitat for species that live in mature forests, including northern spotted owls.
- Minimize conflict between predators, livestock and people within the forest by increasing enforcement and working with private landowners, livestock owners and recreation groups.
- Preserve diverse habitat, including mature fir trees for spotted owls, as well as meadows and shrub fields for elk and deer.
- Pursue a stable funding mechanism to provide for adequate enforcement of DNR and WDFW's rules to protect the public, fish, wildlife and habitat.
- Help ensure that the roads and trails network continues to provide recreational access but does not compromise wildlife habitat.
- Protect winter elk range, spotted owl locations and other sensitive sites for wildlife.
- Work with neighboring landowners, both public and private, to improve wildlife habitat on a larger scale.
- Minimize damage to wildlife habitat that can be caused by activities such as grazing, timber harvest and recreation.



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TEANAWAY COMMUNITY FOREST



Summary of draft plan for community partnerships, ongoing management

The Teanaway Community Forest was established with support from an array of individuals, interest groups and government organizations. The forest plays a role in the surrounding communities and attracts visitors from around Washington state.

The Washington departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are working together to carry out the Legislature's directive *to support a strong community partnership, in which the Yakama Nation, residents, business owners, local governments, conservation groups, and others provide advice about ongoing land management.*

The departments, along with the Teanaway Community Forest Advisory Committee, will discuss at upcoming meetings the role of strong community partnerships in the forest's future.

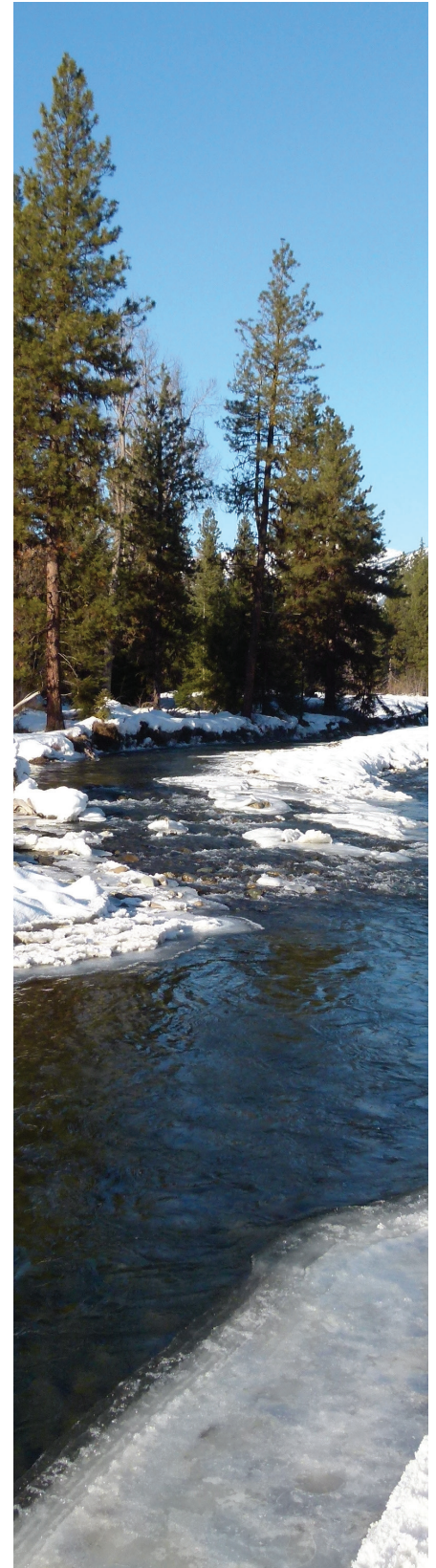
To develop a plan for ongoing management, the committee and departments will consider several topics, including:

- Working with adjacent property owners and communities to coordinate resource and land management.
- Involving the community in maintaining the community forest.
- Educating the public on uses of the forest, such as timber harvesting and grazing.
- Generating revenue to be used for road maintenance, habitat restoration and recreational improvements within the forest.

The departments and the advisory committee welcome your comments relevant to these topics, especially those ideas that would help to address the following questions:

- How can the community best continue to provide advice and be involved after the management plan is written?
- What are potential sources of revenue for the forest?
- What kind of public outreach is needed?
- What educational opportunities does the forest offer?

Please submit this comment sheet during the open house. Comments can also be submitted via email to teanaway@dnr.wa.gov or by mail to DNR's Southeast regional office, 173 Bowers Road, Ellensburg, WA 98926-9301.



For more information: www.dnr.wa.gov/teanaway