



DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS

Description of proposal: The proposal is to establish a sustainable harvest level for the 2015 to 2024 planning decade for forested state trust land in western Washington.

Proponent: Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Location of proposal: All forested state trust lands located west of the Cascade Crest in Washington State (refer to attached map).

Lead agency: DNR

Determination: *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required.* The lead agency has determined this proposal potentially will have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An EIS is required under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.21C.030(2)(c) and will be prepared.

Deadline for comments: Friday February 27, 2015 by 5:00 pm

Scoping notice invites comments:

Scoping is the first formal step in preparing an EIS and initiates public involvement. Through scoping, DNR seeks public input on identifying the areas that require in-depth analysis, and those areas for which a more limited discussion is appropriate. This process helps to focus DNR's consideration on the issues that are truly significant, and avoids obscuring those issues with unnecessary detail. The primary purposes of scoping are to:

- Narrow the focus of the EIS to significant environmental issues;
- Eliminate issues that would have insignificant impacts, or that are not directly related to the proposal;
- Identify alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS; and
- Identify mitigation measures that address potential environmental impacts of the proposal.

Areas for public comment:

Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required.

DNR welcomes all comments relevant to the scope of the EIS. If you are suggesting a particular approach or impacts to consider, please explain why. The more evidence provided in support of a comment, such as peer-reviewed studies or reports, the more useful that comment will be to DNR in its analysis. Detailed and supported comments will help in developing a robust EIS. Suggested comment topic areas include the following:

- Probable significant environmental impacts that need to be considered in the adoption of the sustainable harvest level.
- Key environmental issues that need to be addressed and analyzed by one or more of the alternatives.
- Alternatives that need to be considered that will meet the need for, and the purpose of, the proposal.
- Specific mitigation measures that DNR should consider to avoid or minimize impacts.
- Identification of additional environmental information, studies, or reports relevant to the development of sustainable harvest level alternatives.

In the EIS, DNR will analyze the No Action Alternative and reasonable action alternatives (to be identified as a result of scoping). Alternatives to be considered in the EIS must meet the following parameters:

- DNR's trust mandate
- Applicable forest practices rules (Title 222 WAC)
- All other applicable state and federal regulations
- All current DNR policies, including the objectives of the *State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan*
- Proposed purpose and need statement (attached to this notice)

You may submit these comments via one of the following methods:

- USPS mail: Department of Natural Resources, SEPA Center, MS: 47015, Olympia, WA 98504-7015
- Email: sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov

Background Information:

In Washington, DNR manages approximately 5.6 million acres of state trust lands. State trust lands are lands held in trust for specific trust beneficiaries, such as public schools and universities. The term "state trust lands" refers to both State lands and State forest lands:

- State lands (RCW 79.02.010(14)) are lands granted to the state by the federal government at statehood. State lands are also referred to as Federal Grant Lands.
- State forest lands (RCW 79.02.010(13)) are lands acquired by Washington State from the counties. There are two types: State Forest Purchase Lands, which are lands purchased or acquired by the state as a gift, and State Forest Transfer Lands, which are lands transferred to the state from the counties.

As a trust lands manager, DNR's responsibility is to manage these lands consistent with fiduciary principles, which include producing a perpetual supply of revenue for specific trust beneficiaries. On forested state trust lands, revenue is produced primarily through the harvesting of trees.

Providing a perpetual supply of revenue requires responsible management with an emphasis on long-term sustainability. A major component DNR's approach to sustainable management is calculation of a sustainable harvest level, which is the volume of timber to be scheduled for sale during a planning decade according to applicable laws, policies, and procedures (RCW 79.10.300)(5). Put another way, the sustainable harvest level is the amount of timber DNR can harvest from forested state trust lands on a continuing basis without major prolonged curtailment or cessation of harvest.

The sustainable harvest level applies to all forested state trust lands located west of the Cascade Crest in Washington (approximately 1.4 million acres). These lands are divided into 20 sustainable harvest units, each of which is assigned its own sustainable harvest level for the decade.

- The Westside Sustainable Harvest Unit consists of all State lands (Federal Grant Lands) and State Forest Purchase Lands located west of the Cascade Crest, with the exception of lands located inside the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) and Capitol State Forest.
- The OESF and Capitol State Forests consist of all State lands (Federal Grant Lands), State Forest Purchase Lands, and State Forest Transfer Lands located within their respective boundaries.
- Each of the 17 counties is a separate State Forest Transfer unit. Each unit consists of all State Forest Transfer Lands located within their respective county boundaries, with the exception of lands located in the OESF and Capitol State Forest.

The sustainable harvest level is defined in board feet, which is a unit of volume equivalent to a 12-inch square, one-inch thick piece of wood. The level is recalculated every 10 years. To ensure one generation of beneficiaries is not favored over another, the next decade's level cannot rise or fall more than 25 percent from the previous decade's level.

DNR is required to set a sustainable harvest level by Washington state law. Specifically, DNR must periodically adjust acreages designated for inclusion in the sustained yield management program and calculate a sustainable harvest level (RCW 79.10.320). Sustained yield means harvesting on a continual basis without major prolonged curtailment or cessation of harvest (RCW 79.10.310). The sustainable harvest level is a policy decision that requires approval from the Board of Natural Resources.

DNR calculates the sustainable harvest level through a forest estate modeling process. The forest estate model is a mathematical, computer-based representation of the forest. Capable of manipulating vast quantities of data, the model is able to look across landscapes and decades to determine the sustainable harvest level that is the best balance of DNR's management objectives, which include both revenue production and ecological values such as wildlife habitat.

Notice of Public Meeting:

<p>Live webinar Meeting Date: Thursday, February 12, 2015 Meeting Time: 4:00-5:00 pm Meeting Location: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2008837794735245825</p>	<p>Recorded webinar Meeting Date: Available after February 9, 2015 Meeting Time: Ongoing Meeting Location: http://www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/SustainableHarvestImplementation/Pages/Im_sust_harvest_implementation.aspx</p>
--	--

Responsible official: Mary Verner
Position/Title: Deputy Supervisor, Resource Protection & Administration
Phone: 360-902-1739
Address: Department of Natural Resources P.O. Box 47001 Olympia, WA 98504-7001

Date: January 29, 2015

Signature: Mary B. Verner

There is no DNR administrative SEPA appeal.

Sustainable Harvest Calculation

Purpose and Need

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to establish a sustainable harvest level for the 2015 to 2024 planning decade for forested state trust land in western Washington.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the proposal is to:

- Analyze the sustainable harvest level associated with the Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy alternatives;
- Analyze alternative courses of action regarding the arrearage from the 2004 to 2014 planning decade; and
- Incorporate new information into an updated model to calculate the decadal sustainable timber harvest level. New information includes changes in the land base, changes in forest inventory, and changes in technology.

NEED

DNR needs to calculate a new sustainable harvest level and determine the best course of action regarding the arrearage¹ consistent with state law and DNR policy.

- RCW 79.10.320 requires DNR to “periodically adjust the acreages designated for inclusion in the sustained yield management program and calculate a sustainable harvest level.”
- RCW 79.10.330 states that “[i]f an arrearage exists at the end of any planning decade, the department shall conduct an analysis of alternatives to determine the course of action regarding the arrearage which provides the greatest return to the trusts based upon economic conditions then existing and forecast, as well as impacts on the environment of harvesting the additional timber. The department shall offer for sale the arrearage in addition to the sustainable harvest level adopted by the board of natural resources for the next planning decade if the analysis determined doing so will provide the greatest return to the trusts.”
- The 2006 *Policy for Sustainable Forests* states that “[t]he department, with Board of Natural Resources approval, will recalculate the statewide sustainable harvest level, for Board of Natural Resources adoption no less frequently than every ten years.”

The final selected alternative for the 2015 to 2024 sustainable harvest level is expected to meet the following:

- The *Policy for Sustainable Forest*;
- The *State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan*;
- Applicable forest practices rules (Title 222 WAC); and
- All other applicable state and federal regulations.

¹ Arrearage from the 2005-2014 planning decade is the difference between the harvest level and the timber sold during that decade.

State Trust Lands Sustainable Harvest Units



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

