



Overview of Proposed Land Exchange between Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

OBJECTIVE

DNR and WDFW are pursuing an exchange agreement that will allow DNR and WDFW to consolidate several thousand acres of land. Most of these lands are in separate parcels — a checkerboard ownership pattern — in eastern Washington but primarily in Kittitas, Yakima, and Chelan counties. Repositioning these lands will increase help assure long-term revenue to DNR-managed trust land beneficiaries and enhance effective habitat management by both agencies.

BENEFITS

- Improved operational efficiency as each agency consolidates ownership and obtains key in-holdings.
- Improved revenue potential for trust beneficiaries.
- Increased ability for each agency to manage lands most appropriately for the specific landscape.
- Enhanced future options for managing landscapes under DNR's Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Improved management of critical wildlife habitat and migration routes.
- Increased potential for recreational opportunities.
- Enhanced sustainability of forest landscapes and forest health.

This exchange would complement recent DNR land exchanges that accomplish similar goals.

EXCHANGE SPECIFICS

WDFW to DNR: up to 55,000± acres DNR to WDFW: up to 95,000± acres

Exchange involves eight state trusts: Common School, Agricultural School, University-Transferred, Charitable, Capitol Building, Normal School, Escheat, and Scientific School.

WDFW lands to DNR

- Proposed WDFW exchange lands are in Chelan, Kittitas, Okanogan, and Yakima counties.
- Large portion of WDFW exchange lands are forestlands above 3,000' elevation.
- Properties were acquired in part with state and federal grant funds from the National Park Service, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office.

DNR lands to WDFW

- Proposed DNR properties in: Asotin, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima counties.
- DNR properties are primarily shrub steppe or forestlands below 3,000' elevation.
- Most proposed exchange properties were formerly leased to WDFW; a small portion of the parcels have been leased by private parties.
- Properties are largely intermingled (checkerboard) with WDFW or private ownership lands.
- Timber species and composition represent types found along the east slopes of the Cascades.
- Properties support an abundance of wildlife species, including some listed as threatened and endangered.

EXCHANGE BALANCE

- The final exchange of property will be balanced for equal market value between the state trusts (DNR) and WDFW.
- Values are determined by an independent market appraisal.
- Not all lands being appraised will necessarily be included in the exchange.
- The trusts will be evaluated and repositioned to lands of equal market value.

PROGRESS

- November and December 2006: DNR and WDFW participated in public workshops in 11 locations throughout Washington State regarding the exchange.
- April 2008: DNR held public hearings, which were also attended by representatives of WDFW, in Ellensburg, Omak, and Olympia.

WHAT'S NEXT

- DNR website (www.dnr.wa.gov) will be updated as changes occur.
- Completion of appraisals and balancing of values.
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) processes to be completed.
- DNR and WDFW to evaluate the public meeting comments, public hearing comments, SEPA and NEPA comments, property appraisals, due diligence results, and other transaction-related materials to make their final recommendations about the exchange.
- Exchange agreement to be presented to the Board of Natural Resources and the Wildlife Commission for final approvals.
- Close transaction and convey properties (if approved by the Board of Natural Resources and the Wildlife Commission).

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Find additional information at: www.dnr.wa.gov