



Proposed Boundary Expansion for Dabob Bay Natural Area

The Commissioner of Public Lands has approved the proposed boundary expansion of the Dabob Bay Natural Area in Jefferson County. The site is located approximately three miles east of Quilcene, at the head of Dabob Bay. Land within the boundary acquired from willing sellers, or transferred from other public ownership, will be designated as a Natural Area Preserve (NAP), or Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA).

The ecological importance of Dabob Bay Natural Area

Currently, the preserve protects 195 acres of coastal spit, estuary, and upland forestland. It is ecologically important as one of the largest high-quality salt marsh estuary and sand spit complexes in the Puget Sound.

The greater Dabob Bay area supports a variety of wildlife species, including salmon and other fish, Olympia oysters, waterfowl, and bald eagles. The uplands surrounding the bay contain mature forest stands and examples of unusual forest types.

The area within the proposed boundary includes coastal bluffs and shorelines that provide sediment and woody debris for the continued ecological function of the coastal spits. The proposed expansion could add up to 3,200 acres of shoreline and upland forests.

Benefits to the local community

Natural Area expansion would:

- Increase the amount of open space within the watershed.
- Provide long-term protection of a significant portion of the Dabob/Tarboo Bay shoreline and uplands.
- Accommodate the needs of local schools and organized clubs for educational field trips and projects.
- Provide research opportunities for students and scientists.

Impacts to private landowners

The boundary expansion allows the department to discuss the potential purchase of lands from willing sellers at market value as determined by a third-party appraisal.

- DNR's purchases of private lands are from willing sellers only.
- Existing local laws continue to apply; no land use change or zoning restrictions will be imposed on privately owned land that may be within the boundary.
- Conservation easements are an option for interested landowners.
- Market value is determined by an objective, third party appraisal.

Public participation in the site expansion process

A community meeting and subsequent public hearing were held in 2008. Comments were received at an informational public meeting and a follow-up boundary hearing. The department considered the written and verbal comments received in making the final determination of the proposed boundary.

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Washington's Natural Areas Program

DNR's Natural Areas Program protects outstanding examples of the state's extraordinary diversity. These lands represent the finest natural, undisturbed ecosystems in state ownership, often protecting features unique to this region of the country. DNR manages two types of natural areas – Natural Resources Conservation Areas (NRCA) and Natural Areas Preserves (NAP). These special sites offer opportunities for research and education. Some have interpretive trails, and many provide low-impact recreation opportunities. Others require permission to visit, because features are sensitive to human disturbance. Currently, there are 53 NAPs on 35,000 acres and 29 NRCAs on 94,000 acres. Visit <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/nap/> to learn more about DNR's Natural Areas Program.