1 **No Action/No Change (Current Practices)**

2 **No Harvest/No Take**

VI. Alternatives to the HCP that Would Avoid Take

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A discussion of the range of alternatives can be found in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. However, to meet the requirements for an HCP, a brief discussion is included here of alternatives that would avoid take and why they are not as suitable for DNR-managed lands as operating under an HCP with incidental take permits. (A copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement can be obtained from DNR.)

No Action/No Change (Current Practices)

This alternative is considered in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Like this HCP, the No Action/No Change alternative adheres to trust duties, state Forest Practices Rules, policies of the Board of Natural Resources, and laws of general applicability such as the Endangered Species Act.

Briefly, under the No Action/No Change alternative, DNR would not seek incidental take permits or an agreement on unlisted species from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service. DNR would not implement a habitat conservation plan. To comply with the Endangered Species Act, DNR's trust land management would be regulated by the federal government and guided by the policies of the Board of Natural Resources as stated in the 1992 Forest Resource Plan.

DNR would continue management policies and practices designed to reduce the risk of violating the Endangered Species Act. Specific policies and practices with regard to compliance with federal law are not necessarily associated with state Forest Practices Rules. Risk-management practices or policies include:

(1) conducting two-year surveys on proposed timber sales in suitable spotted owl habitat;

(2) deferring from sale some suitable spotted owl habitat within the boundary of the Olympic Experimental State Forest;

(3) deferring timber sales involving potential marbled murrelet habitat within 40 miles of marine waters and conducting a case by case review of sales between 40 and 52.25 miles;

(4) conducting marbled murrelet habitat relationship studies to assist the Board of Natural Resources in determining an acceptable level of risk; and

(5) screening certain other sales for potential taking of a federally listed species.

Under the No Action/No Change alternative, the focus of DNR's conservation efforts related to compliance with the Endangered Species Act is on current habitat conditions. Existing suitable habitat for murrelets would be essentially off limits for harvest; and in areas now occupied by spotted owls, sales would be offered only where there is more than 40 percent habitat within a circle. Where survey information shows a spotted owl activity center (or circle) has been abandoned, additional acres would be available for sale upon the completion of a series of decertification surveys. Conversely, where surveys show new spotted owl activity and habitat below the 40 percent threshold, these areas would be off limits. The No Action alternative assumes DNR will continue to survey in an attempt to clear for harvest as much mature timber as possible, but also that the Board would continue its current risk-management approach regarding sales in suitable habitat. The costs of complying with the Endangered Species Act would include the costs of continuing the current survey program.

Uncertainty regarding compliance with the Endangered Species Act is the dominant feature of this alternative and would continue through time. Requirements could stiffen, more species could be listed, or requirements could relax with changes in federal policy. DNR would respond to changing the Endangered Species Act requirements and take precautions when guidance is lacking to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

The No Action/No Change alternative does not allow DNR to provide the same level of certainty, stability, and flexibility as the HCP would in carrying out DNR's duties as trust manager. (See the section of Chapter II titled Trust Duties.) Because of the continuing changes in regulations to avoid take of a listed species and the possible listings of additional species with more resulting regulations, there is a degree of uncertainty that inhibits DNR's management. Such uncertainty causes lack of stability in DNR's timber sales program, which is the primary source of revenue for the trusts. Uncertainty also limits flexibility in operations. In contrast, it is expected that the HCP will allow DNR to better meet its duty to the trust of striving to produce the most substantial support possible over the long term consistent with all trust duties conveyed on DNR by the state of Washington.

No Harvest/No Take

Briefly, under the No Harvest alternative, DNR would achieve compliance with the Endangered Species Act by not conducting harvest activities, building roads, or conducting other land management activities within or near existing and potential habitat for listed and candidate species. Forested trust lands would be unmanaged in an effort to grow new habitat for listed and candidate species. This alternative is not feasible because it would not allow DNR to meet its legal obligations to the trusts. (See the section of Chapter II titled Trust Duties.) To eliminate the state's responsibilities as trustee, the State Enabling Act and the State Constitution would have to be amended.