

**Dabob Bay NAP expansion comments and Q&A response
October 6, 2008**

Comments are from the May 2008 public meeting and later communications (emails, letters)

Key Messages from the Comments “For” the Proposed Boundary Expansion	Key Messages “Against” the Proposal
A. Consider including most land to the south on the west side, and include steep slopes and streams	1. This proposal will stop logging
B. Consider including forest and steep slopes on east side of Tarboo Creek	2. Disproportionate percentage of “locked up” government or conservation land now
C. Include remainder of the watershed	3. Tax burden becomes greater on taxed lands
D. Include the areas under study on the northeast and northwest corners; Bring the boundary to Coyle Road on the east and Dabob Road on the west.	4. Concern about limited public access in NAP
E. Protect Dabob Bay instead of polluting it and cleaning it up later; Save public money	5. Statement that Jefferson County added regulations to private property once adjacent conservation lands were purchased through a federal grant
F. Include the timber sale area on Coyle Road	6. Against government conservation in any form
G. Support protecting ecological processes, not just rare plants	7. Removal of timber sales taxes from local jurisdictions puts public safety and infrastructure in jeopardy
H. Will help protect the oyster industry in Dabob Bay; economically important to them	
I. Protect Dabob Bay and log a less sensitive area instead	
J. Support combination of NAP to protect sensitive areas and NRCA to allow appropriate public use	
K. Cheaper to protect intact ecosystems than restore degraded ones	
L. Will add protection to the WDFW parcel at the mouth of Tarboo Bay	
M. DNR natural areas are non-regulatory approach for protection	
N. Provide a conservative setback from unstable slopes, 500 feet	
O. Maximize the area of NAP versus NRCA	
P. Protect this unspoiled area of Hood Canal and Puget Sound	
Q. Support NRCA over NAP to allow limited public use	
R. Include the entire timber sale (under appeal) area to the NE; Withdraw the timber sale and use existing Trust Land Transfer funds to buy this area	

Key Messages from the Comments “For” the Proposed Boundary Expansion	Key Messages “Against” the Proposal
S. Designate the “inner” 80 acres of the WDFW parcel as NAP and the “outer” 80 acres as NRCA	
T. Establish continuity of habitat and reinforce other conservation efforts in the watershed	
U. Serves as high quality habitat and also as a wildlife refugia	
V. Protection of existing habitat is most cost-effective means of species recovery	
W. DNR’s expansion of the natural area is timely in light of the state’s initiative to protect Puget Sound	
X. This would assist with the Department of Ecology’s strategic priority of restoring the health of Hood Canal	
Y. Forest conversions to other uses has impacted area wildlife	
Z. Exchange forest lands within Fire District #2 for no net loss of revenue	

Questions About the Proposal	Response to Questions
I. Effect on the county and junior taxing districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future PILT (“payment in lieu of taxes,” at the open space property tax rate) is a new revenue source for the county and junior taxing districts for lands within a natural area • Any State Forest Lands (those benefitting the county, and formerly known as “Forest Board Lands”) that may be transferred to natural area status will be replaced with new State Forest Lands; The location of new lands depends upon a variety of investment factors; DNR is not able to predict with certainty where those assets will be located prior to undertaking a full analysis prior to transfer but will make every effort to maintain the State Forest land base within the county and junior taxing districts as qualified land exchange parcels present opportunities; However it is ultimately the a county government responsibility to track benefiting junior taxing districts’ share of income produced from State Forest Lands located elsewhere
II. Effect on local economy from removal of timber harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For State Forest Lands, the effect on the Jefferson County economy should be negligible (and could be beneficial) since replacement lands will be purchased within the county • For state Common School Trust lands, replacement assets may or may not be acquired within Jefferson County, thus the effect is uncertain • DNR does not have research information on the economic effects on local communities, whether positive or negative, of changes in natural resource management
III. Include shellfish resources protected by the proposal in description of economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR does not have information about the economic value of the existing shellfish resources on private lands adjacent to the natural area
IV. Document the impacts under current forest practices to the oyster beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current forest practices regulations are intended to minimize the potential of such impacts
V. Tax benefits of NAP and NRCA designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of a natural area does not directly affect area taxation of private property

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VI. The impact of natural area designation on surrounding land values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR has no data or analysis of surrounding land values following natural area designation • Anecdotal information from neighbors and conservation industry professionals indicates no significant changes in general, with perhaps a bias toward increased property values due to the aesthetic benefits of conservation lands
VII. Concern about the proposal causing additional county regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR does not regulate the activities of private property owners neighboring natural areas • DNR operates under the same federal, state and local land use regulations as private property owners in its capacity as natural area land manger • DNR does not request additional local regulations related to natural areas land management
VIII. Concern about public access (unclear whether the comment is about potential impacts from public access, or a desire to provide public access) IX. Also...What public access and use restrictions are on NAPs and NRCAs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each natural area (whether it is a “natural resources conservation area” or “natural area preserve”) is analyzed on a site-by-site basis, and through a management planning process that includes community involvement, for opportunities for public access • Conservation areas (NRCAs) allow for a wider variety of “low-impact public uses” than preserves (NAPs), which have a primary focus on public access for research and environmental education (although NAPs do allow for some additional access in buffer areas away from sensitive features) • State statutes, DNR policies and DNR management plans all provide the basis for analysis of public access opportunities and any potential impacts to the conservation values
X. Clarify natural heritage analysis areas (as presented on the PowerPoint map) and acquisition priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area assessed for natural heritage features essentially included the area draining into the bay, from Dabob road on north to the natural narrowing point of the bay on the south • Within this assessment area, DNR staff identified 12 primary natural heritage features including different types of sand spit, salt marsh, and forest communities (including old forest structure), as well as 12 other features of conservation concern including marine forage fish, estuarine habitat, nesting birds, and waterfowl • DNR consulted slope stability maps to assess areas influencing the long-term viability of the existing preserve, as well as habitat for additional features identified in the assessment • The recommended boundary focuses on providing increased protection for the elements within the existing NAP and also includes areas that support the additional features identified in the natural heritage assessment; Areas identified as having the most direct influence on the existing NAP have been recommended as additions to the NAP, and the remainder of the area is recommended as a NRCA • Acquisition at natural areas (new sites or expansions) generally occurs first in the highest priority ecological areas and then additional properties are assembled to complete the site design; However since properties are purchased from willing sellers only, DNR will analyze all opportunities presented to it in relation to available land acquisition funds

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<p>XI. Can a land trade be done to keep the local taxing district revenues the same? Or, designate new lands; and who does that, DNR or the county?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the similar question above regarding replacement State Forest Lands • DNR, with guidance from the Board of Natural Resources, identifies parcels for disposition and acquisition for each of the trusts it manages
<p>XII. How is the project area determined (especially buffers)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommended NAP boundary includes all coastal bluffs and shorelines that provide sediment and woody debris for continued ecological function of the NAP spits, Broad Spit, and the shoreline habitats themselves • The recommended NRCA boundary includes areas that provide “buffer” to the NAP as well as areas of moderate priority forest elements (those with isolated old forest structural features), and additional shoreline and riparian features; This area includes unstable slopes and drainages immediately upslope from the recommended NAP boundary, unstable slopes and drainages at the head of Tarboo Bay, and an area that would primarily provide connectivity between upper Discovery Creek old forests and the recommended NAP • Also, see response to Question X for additional information on how the area was assessed
<p>XIII. What has been the loss to junior taxing districts of lands moving to NAP status?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State lands, including natural area preserves, have traditionally not been subject to state and local property taxes, thus no valuation or taxation information is available to DNR • In 2005, the Washington State Legislature approved “payment in lieu of taxes” (PILT) at the county’s open space tax rate for all current and future DNR lands designated as NAP or NRCA
<p>XIV. Who manages NAPs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Washington State Department of Natural Resources, among other landowning state agencies, is tasked by state law with identifying, acquiring and managing the statewide system of natural area preserves (RCW 79.70); Federal or local agencies, as well as private conservation organizations, may manage similar research and habitat areas that are included in the statewide system • DNR’s preserves are identified through the DNR Natural Heritage Program, under the guidance of a citizen advisory body (the Natural Heritage Advisory Council), acquired by the DNR Special Lands Acquisition Program or DNR Trust Land Transfer Program and are ultimately managed by the DNR Natural Areas Program, which has local land managers in each DNR field office
<p>XV. Do local citizens have the same “voice” on these matters as those outside the area?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone participating in the public review of DNR proposals is treated equally • The system of natural areas managed by DNR is a statewide resource (per RCW 79.70 and RCW 79.71)

/CWP