



SB 5973 / HB 2126

Community Forest Trust Account

A Tool to Facilitate the Preservation of Working Forests

Issue Community forests require a dedicated account for funds related to community forest trust lands. This dedicated account will help define the difference between state trust forests, which are managed for revenue production for state beneficiaries, and community forests, which are managed to preserve working forests with local communities. A dedicated account will also segregate community forest funds from state trust resources, which by law cannot be used for activities that do not support trust beneficiaries.



Currently, funds to manage community forests are placed in the Park Land Trust Revolving Fund. This fund is focused on acquisition and management activities on state trust lands.

Background

In 2011, the legislature created the Community Forest Trust Act as a way to prevent Washington's working forests from being converted to other uses. This legislation allowed local communities to partner with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in acquiring and managing working forests at high risk of conversion to non-forest uses. The legislation was unique because, though there are many tools to protect recreation lands and open spaces, this was the first that allowed local communities to collaborate with state government to protect working forests.

The Teanaway Community Forest was the first use of this legislation and represents an innovated and unprecedented collaborative management partnership between DNR and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Through a Habitat Restoration and Working Lands Easement and inclusive interagency agreement, DNR and WDFW have agreed that the best way to manage funds for this ground-breaking partnership and new type of designated forest is through a dedicated Community Forest Trust Account. This account will be utilized for the Teanaway Community Forest and for all future community forests.

- Proposal**
- ▶ **Creates a new account in the State Treasury solely for community forest trust program purposes.**
 - ▶ **Identifies funds designated for the Community Forest Trust Account and authorizes DNR to make expenditures.**
 - ▶ **Preserves the requirement of board approval of expenditures where it presently exists.**

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Subject to revision | November 14, 2013