



**Forest Health Advisory Committee
March 17, 2020
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

For information about the Forest Health Advisory Committee including meeting agendas and materials please visit this link: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/ForestHealthAdvisoryCmte>

20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan Communications and Outreach

DNR staff have developed communications tools to help answer common questions and explain the scientific basis for the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan. The group focused on reviewing the draft FAQ and provided a number of helpful comments and feedback:

- Carbon modeling may be a helpful way to clarify the potential changes in carbon storage associated with treatments. Interest expressed in thinking about how to capture carbon benefits of maintaining older and larger trees that may otherwise burn in uncharacteristic fires.
- Wildlife habitat is an important consideration and was suggested to be more prominently represented throughout.
- Visuals that accompany the FAQ could be helpful in giving the reader a sense of what DNR and partners are seeking to accomplish.
- Funding sources could be shared as part of this document to help reader understand the types of work that are required to do this work and who is currently paying for it.
- Suggestion to think about questions that may speak to a broader audience, not just a vocal minority of potential skeptics or critics.
- Engage the communications and outreach sub-committee to further refine and document and review an updated draft. Committee could also help develop some talking points that could be used by the department and partners as we think about how to share consistent and clear messages about our collaborative work.

Action item: schedule FHAC Communications and Outreach Sub-Committee conference call to review the updated draft FAQ.

Legislative Debrief

DNR Legislative Director, Amanda Jahshan, shared a brief overview of the legislative session. There were priority agency requests associated with implementation of the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan and 10-Year Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan. There was a budget proviso passed to support Urban and Community Forestry Program, including two pilot projects in the state. The state also created a \$50M climate resilience fund. DNR, as well as other agencies, are submitting requests for priority actions. Those proposals will be reviewed in November 2020. There was interest expressed in advancing projects that support forest health treatments.

During the legislative session there was inaccurate information shared about the costs associated with thinning and fuels treatments. DNR and partners responded to the requests for information about treatment costs to ensure more accurate information was shared with the legislature. Amanda offered to share that information with the Forest Health Advisory Committee following the meeting. The University of Washington is also currently conducting a study to evaluate treatment costs and potential revenue associated with implementation of the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan. That report should be available by next June. Members of the group expressed interest in getting accurate information as soon as possible so that partners can be responsive during campaign season.

Department of Fish and Wildlife shared an update on their budget and outcomes from the legislative session. There was an approximately \$30M deficit going into this session. DFW shared that they are pleased that the legislature provided \$27M to support core services through June 2021. This includes burn team and forestry positions. It's a huge relief and big boost for morale at the department.

Members of the group shared interest in putting together an ad hoc sub-committee to look ahead to next legislative session and discuss partner priorities related to forest health and resilience.

Action item: FHAC committee coordinator will work with DNR leadership and FHAC members to schedule a follow up forest health leg sub-committee meeting.

Forest Action Plan – Western Washington Landscape Resilience

Forest Action Plan Coordinator presented a brief overview of the Forest Action Plan mapping efforts and updates on the landscape resilience mapping for Western Washington. This process is intended to mirror and support outcomes similar to the work done for the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan: Eastern Washington. The group reviewed the purpose of the mapping exercise, methods and data that will be used to identify potential priority landscapes, and discussed how the final map products are anticipated to be used.

There were data associated with wildfire, recreation, and invasive species that were considered but not included, either due to lack of scientific consensus about how those available data would inform potential active management and restoration, or due to a lack of data available at the scale of all of western Washington. Local planning efforts will need to incorporate data at that scale into more focused planning efforts that will occur in priority areas.

The group provided feedback on the draft maps:

- Climate change is important driver in the future. Incorporate carbon storage and sequestration into the prioritization. Trillion trees initiative may be helpful to reference in the report.
- Consider conversion risk and the places that may be most at risk to losing forest cover.
- Water storage is important and there is a need to mitigate potential impacts associated with more severe rain on snow and precipitation events. Consider ways to account for flooding in the analysis.

Closing Remarks

Jen Watkins provided closing remarks. The team at DNR is excited to keep you engaged, despite everything going on right now we want to continue to make progress towards our goals and keep you involved. Forest Health Highlights report is coming out soon and is likely to be a focal topic for our June Forest Health Advisory Committee meeting. June will also be a good time to share updates on the Forest Health Tracker being developed by the department and discuss 2021 legislative priorities. We know that many of you have been hearing from Tom Bugert, really appreciate the input you're providing him. We'll be working with Tom to be responsive and keep these meetings relevant and helpful to all of us.