Forested State Trust Lands: Supporting Schools, Counties, and Critical Services

MANAGING WORKING FORESTS

State trust lands are different than other publicly managed lands. They come with a legal responsibility to generate revenue for their designated beneficiaries, such as schools, counties, and critical local services.

There are more than 2 million acres of forested state trust lands managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for long-term timber production, specific habitat objectives, and protection of clean, abundant water. These forests often provide public recreation opportunities, too.

As stewards of the lands and natural resources, DNR draws upon a variety of staff, including foresters, engineers, geologists, biologists, hydrologists, soil scientists, economists, and others as management activities are planned. All DNR-managed forested trust lands are certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI). Certified forests are grown to an approved set of standards that demonstrate environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable management practices. For more information on DNR’s forest certification program, go online to bit.ly/DNRandSFI.

KEY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Habitat Conservation Plan
DNR provides habitat for species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Policy for Sustainable Forests
The agency’s forest management policies were adopted by the Board of Natural Resources in 2006.

Sustainable Harvest
Forest trust lands are managed to generate sustained yield. Decadal harvest levels are approved by the Board of Natural Resources.

Washington Forest Practices Act
DNR follows state regulations to protect public resources, such as water quality and fish habitat, on lands managed by the agency.

State Environmental Policy Act
Timber harvests and construction on trust lands are reviewed for probable significant adverse impact and involve the public.
Several key factors were considered in the planning of this sale:

- Generating revenue for Mason County services
- Mitigation, such as no-harvest buffers around sensitive sites, to preserve water quality and retain long-term forest cover for wildlife species under DNR's Habitat Conservation Plan
- Assessments by geologists and foresters to protect potentially unstable slopes identified by the Forest Practice Rules
- Units are planned for variable retention harvest, which includes the retention of wildlife trees, standing dead trees, and stream buffers to promote wildlife habitat and replanting following harvest
- This sale is estimated to generate $1.6 million for Mason County, depending on market conditions

CONTACT

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