

Manual for the

Trust Land Transfer Program



May, 2023



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Acknowledgements

This manual was prepared by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Strategic Planning Division.

On the cover

Large photo: Morningstar Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA)

Small inset photos, top to bottom: Mount Si NRCA, Trout Lake Natural Area Preserve (NAP), and Bone River NAP

All of these areas include acres of state trust lands transferred to DNR's Natural Areas Program through Trust Land Transfer.

All photos in this manual were taken by DNR staff unless noted otherwise.

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Prepared by
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Spring 2023



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Section One

Introduction

This section includes the following:

- What the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program is and how it works
- How the TLT program is funded
- How long the TLT process takes
- Past successes and revitalization for the future

What is Trust Land Transfer?

Trust Land Transfer (TLT) is a legislatively funded, land portfolio management program that allows DNR to reposition certain state trust lands to better serve the trust beneficiaries and the people of Washington.

State trust lands are lands held in trust and managed to generate revenue for specific trust beneficiaries, and to meet ecological goals based on current state and federal laws and DNR policies.

There are two categories of state trust lands:

- The **federally granted lands**, or State Lands,¹ which were granted to the state at statehood through the 1889 Enabling Act² as a means of support for various public institutions in the new state. The majority of state trust lands fall into this category.
- **State Forestlands**³, which were acquired by 21 counties in the 1920s and 1930s through tax foreclosures. Other State Forestlands were purchased or acquired by the state as a gift.

About This Manual

This manual will provide you the background and information you need to select and nominate a parcel of state trust lands for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program. Information on the TLT program also can be found on DNR's website at

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/managed-lands/land-transactions/trust-land-transfer>.

¹ [RCW 79.02.010 \(15\)](#)

² 25 Stat. 676, chs. 180, 276–284

³ [RCW 79.02.010 \(14\)](#)

Roughly 80 percent of the revenue generated on state trust lands comes from timber harvest. DNR also leases state trust lands for irrigated and dryland agriculture, livestock grazing, communication sites, commercial real estate, alternative energy generation, mining, and other uses. Revenue from state trust lands funds schools, universities, roads, hospitals, and other essential needs of the people of Washington.



Timber harvest on state trust lands provides revenue for essential public services and facilities.

Not all state trust land parcels are suitable for revenue generation, however. For example, the soil may not support timber production or agriculture, or DNR may lack legal or road access to the parcel or the ability to attain access. These lands are considered economically underperforming. Economic underperformance means the parcel has limited potential to generate income in the reasonably foreseeable future due to physical, legal, access, or other constraints or liabilities ([Substitute House Bill \[SHB\] 1460 Sec. 2 \(2\)](#)).

At the same time, some of these economically underperforming parcels may have high ecological values and public benefits. Examples of high ecological values include habitat for threatened and endangered species, and forests that meet the definition of Old Growth in DNR's [Policy for Sustainable Forests](#)⁴. Public benefits include opportunities for hiking, fishing, horseback riding, environmental education, or scientific study.

Trust Land Transfer (TLT) is a program that enables DNR to keep these special places in public ownership while also improving the financial performance of the state trust lands portfolio. Through TLT, DNR:

- Transfers economically underperforming state trust lands with high ecological values and public benefits to a [receiving agency](#). Many transferred parcels become parks, open space, nature preserves, or similar designations.
- Purchases real property replacement lands that can be managed for timber production or leased for agriculture or other uses to generate long-term, sustainable revenue for beneficiaries of state trust lands.

⁴ Forests at least 5 acres in size that have a natural origin date prior to 1850 and are in the most structurally complex stage of stand development.

How does the program work?

Following is a brief overview of the major steps in the TLT process. All of these steps will be explained in this manual.

1	Nominate a Parcel	An economically underperforming parcel of state trust lands with high ecological values and public benefits is nominated for the TLT program. Anyone can nominate a parcel, as long as they have agreement from a receiving agency to accept and manage the parcel indefinitely.
2	Determine Eligibility	DNR determines if the proposed parcel is eligible for the TLT program. The parcel must have a receiving agency, and the transfer must be in the best interests of the trust beneficiaries. In addition, DNR conducts outreach to tribes and, if the parcel includes State Forestlands, counties and their taxing districts. Feedback gathered during outreach will be considered in the final determination of eligibility.
3	Prioritize	DNR provides a list of eligible parcels to an advisory committee, who prioritizes the list according to five criteria: community involvement and support, ecological values, economic values, public benefits, and tribal support.
4	Transfer	<p>DNR sends the prioritized list first to the Board of Natural Resources for their review, and then to the Washington State Legislature as a budget request. The Legislature considers the prioritized list and sets the funding level in context with other state funding needs. The Legislature may or may not fund all of the transfers on the list.</p> <p>Each individual, funded transfer is presented to the Board of Natural Resources for their approval. Once approved, DNR transfers each parcel to the identified receiving agency.</p>
5	Replace	DNR purchases replacement lands that can earn long-term, sustainable revenue for trust beneficiaries.

How is the TLT program funded?

The TLT program is funded by the Legislature. Refer to Section Six for more information.

How long does the TLT process take?

It takes approximately two years for a parcel to move from its nomination, when an applicant submits a parcel application, to funding, when the Legislature sets a funding level for proposed transfers.

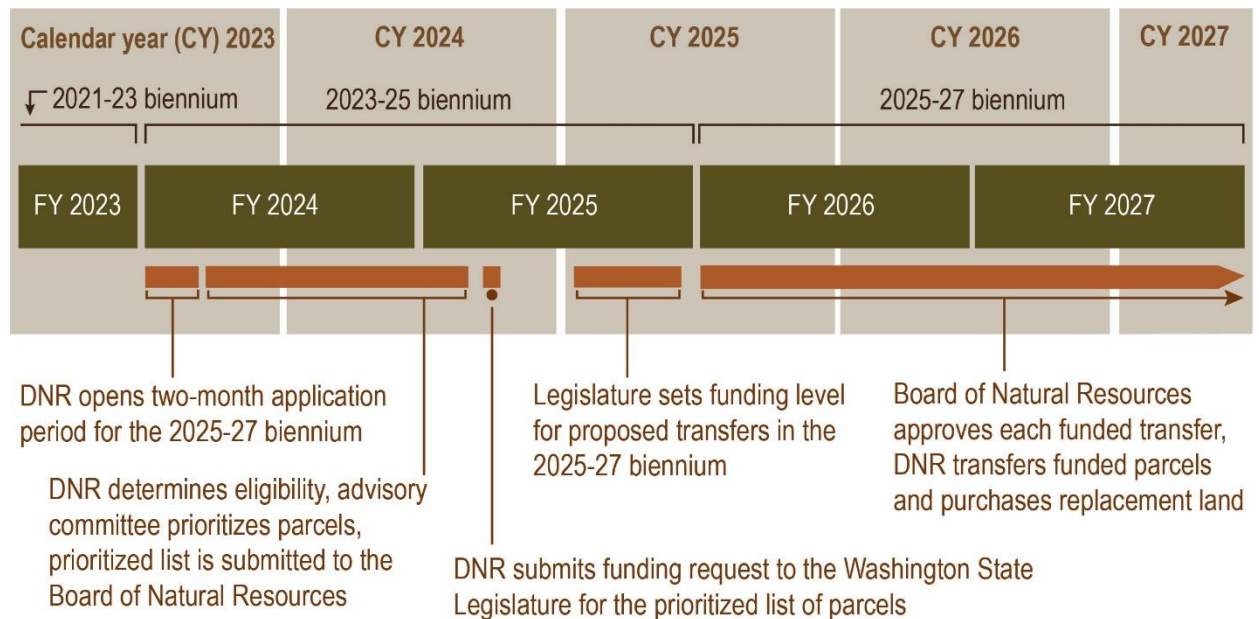
The TLT program runs on two-year cycles because the state's budgets are biennial budgets. A biennium is two fiscal years.

- In Washington state, fiscal years run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year. **A fiscal year is always named for the calendar year in which the fiscal year ends.** For example, the 2025 fiscal year runs from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.
- The biennium always begins and ends on **odd-numbered calendar years** ([RCW 1.16.020](#)).

As an example, the 2025-2027 biennium includes the 2026 fiscal year (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) and the 2027 fiscal year (July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027).

DNR accepts parcel applications for the TLT program at or near the start of the *current* biennium for transfers in the *next* biennium. As an example, DNR will accept applications in the summer of 2023 for transfers in the 2025-27 biennium (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Sample timeline for the 2025-2027 Biennium (FY is fiscal year)



33 years of success

Since its establishment in 1989, the TLT program has been used to transfer over 100,000 acres of state trust lands to DNR's Natural Areas Program, Washington State Parks, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, city and county governments, the Hoh Tribe, and local public park districts. Through this program, DNR also has purchased over 50,000 acres of productive state trust lands that will provide long-term, sustainable revenue for trust beneficiaries. Although the majority of replacement lands have been forested, DNR also has acquired non-forested lands for dryland or irrigated agriculture and other uses.

Creating special places

The TLT program has been instrumental in creating some of the most cherished and iconic parks and natural areas in the state. For example, over 700 of the 1,380 acres that comprise Wallace Falls State Park near Gold Bar, Washington came from TLT. Wallace Falls offers 12 miles of trails, two lakes, and a 259-foot waterfall tumbling in tiers down a heavily forested canyon. Being within an easy drive of Seattle, Wallace Falls is one of the most popular state parks in Washington.



Wallace Falls State Park

In another example, the 5,424-acre Moran State Park in Orcas Island has five lakes, over 30 miles of trails, and a viewpoint on Mount Constitution with a sweeping view of Puget Sound. This park includes over 500 acres transferred through the TLT program. Other popular parks in Washington which have received TLT acres include Lake Sammamish State Park near Bellevue; South Whidbey Island State Park and Fort Ebey State Park on Whidbey Island; Squak Mountain State Park near Issaquah; and Larabee State Park south of Bellingham.



View from Mount Constitution, Moran State Park

Photo courtesy Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks)

In addition, 43 DNR-managed natural areas owe their existence, in full or in part, to the TLT program. For example, the DNR-managed Morning Star Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) off the Mountain Loop Highway preserves outstanding alpine scenery and provides miles of hiking trails for the growing populations of Snohomish and King counties.



Gothic Basin at DNR-managed Morning Star NRCA

Mount Si NRCA near North Bend (also managed by DNR) protects four mountain peaks, several stream systems, and three alpine lakes, providing room to roam for mountain goats and many other wildlife species. Mount Si has become so popular that in the summer, King County offers weekend shuttle service to the trailhead from Seattle, Bellevue, and North Bend to relieve parking pressure at the trailhead.



DNR-managed Mount Si NRCA

Revitalization for a bright future

In 2021 and 2022, DNR and two external work groups identified changes to TLT that made it stronger, more effective, and more transparent. This work was supported by two legislative appropriations and the dedicated efforts of work group members and DNR staff. The TLT webpages and this manual are direct results of these efforts. To learn more about revitalization, visit [this link](#).

Section Two

Selecting a Parcel for Transfer

This section includes the following:

- Lands that are eligible for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program
 - What makes a parcel a good fit for the TLT program
 - Identification of a receiving agency
-

Which DNR-managed lands can be nominated for the TLT program?

The TLT program is open to state trust lands *only*. [Aquatic lands](#) and lands managed under DNR's [Natural Areas Program](#) are not state trust lands and therefore not eligible for TLT.

State trust lands are organized into [several trusts](#), each of which provide revenue to specific trust beneficiaries. For example, the Common School Trust provides revenue for k-12 school construction across Washington State. You may nominate lands within any trust for the TLT program.

Does the parcel have to be forested?

No, the parcel can be forested or non-forested.

Are there any size limitations?

No, there is no minimum or maximum size for a parcel being transferred through this program. However, larger parcels require more funding, and the transfer of these parcels could have significant

impacts on trust beneficiaries, tribes, and local communities, especially if the transfer includes State Forestlands.

For that reason, DNR requires a pre-nomination meeting for parcels that are 4,500 acres or larger, or have an estimated value of \$15 million or more. DNR also strongly recommends a pre-nomination meeting for any parcel, regardless of total size or value, that has 1,000 acres or more of State Forestlands. Keep the following in mind:

- The pre-nomination meeting must include the applicant, DNR, and the [receiving agency](#) who will receive and manage the parcel.
- The pre-nomination meeting must occur at least one month before the application period opens.

Contact DNR to make arrangements. Names and phone numbers of DNR staff are listed under Contacts on [DNR's website](#).

What makes a parcel a good fit for TLT?

The TLT program is for parcels that are both economically underperforming, and have high ecological values and public benefits.

What is economic underperformance, and how do I determine it?

As explained in the introduction, economic underperformance means that the parcel has limited potential to generate income in the reasonably foreseeable future due to physical, legal, access, or other constraints or liabilities. Underperforming parcels generate no revenue, substantially less revenue than desired, or too little revenue to cover costs ([Substitute House Bill 1460, Sec. 2.\(2\)](#)).

As an applicant, you do not need to determine whether a parcel is economically underperforming. In the best interests of the trusts analysis, DNR considers the amount of revenue being generated on the parcel, if any, and the potential of the parcel to generate revenue now and into the future. Refer to Section Four of this manual to learn how DNR conducts this analysis and the factors that contribute to economic underperformance.



DNR-managed Morningstar Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA)

High-elevation sites such as this one are unsuitable for revenue production.

However, DNR recommends you avoid nominating parcels that are obviously generating revenue, such as parcels being cultivated for irrigated crops. Parcels that are currently generating sustainable, long-term revenue for trust beneficiaries are not good candidates for TLT. If you have questions about a parcel, contact one of DNR's transactions specialists. Names and phone numbers are listed under Contacts on [DNR's website](#).

What are ecological values and public benefits?

Ecological values are the water, minerals, biota, and other factors that make up natural ecosystems and support native life forms. Public benefit means a positive effect on the general public or one or more groups of people or community interests. Refer to Section Three of this manual for a more in-depth discussion of these terms.

What else do I need to consider?

As part of the prioritization process, the advisory committee will score the parcels according to five criteria: community involvement and support, ecological values, economic values, public benefits, and tribal support. DNR will describe these criteria in Section Three of this manual.

Keep these criteria in mind when selecting a parcel. For example, consider whether the parcel has high ecological values, or whether establishing a new park or open space would accrue benefits to the local economy, such as attracting visitors who will buy gas, food, and other supplies; eat at local restaurants; or stay at local hotels.



View of Columbia River Gorge, Beacon Rock State Park

Photo courtesy Meryl Lassen, State Parks

Where can I find maps of state trust lands?

Maps are available for download or purchase [at this link](#). A wealth of information about state trust lands is available through DNR's [GIS portal](#).

Do I need to identify a receiving agency?

Yes. To nominate a parcel for transfer through this program, you **must** have agreement from a [receiving agency](#) to accept the transferred parcel and manage it indefinitely. The transferred parcel should be managed to enhance or preserve its ecological values and public benefits.

Per [Substitute House Bill 1460](#), receiving agencies must be a federally recognized tribe or a public agency. Public agencies are defined under [RCW 79.17.200](#). Examples of public agencies include but are not limited to the following:

- Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (“State Parks”)
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- DNR’s Natural Areas Program
- Cities or towns
- Counties
- Public utility districts

May a Receiving Agency Nominate a Parcel?

Yes! If you are a receiving agency interested in acquiring a parcel, you may nominate the parcel yourself. In this case, the receiving agency is also acting as the applicant.

Nominating Parcels Within a DNR Natural Area Boundary

DNR’s Natural Areas Program manages two kinds of natural areas.

- **[Natural Area Preserves \(NAP\)](#)** protect the highest quality, most ecologically important sites on DNR-managed lands, with a focus on environmental education and research.
- **[Natural Resources Conservation Areas \(NRCAs\)](#)** protect outstanding examples of native ecosystems; habitat for endangered, threatened and sensitive plants and animals; and scenic landscapes. In addition to environmental education and research, opportunities for low-impact public uses are provided when they do not impair protected features.

If you are considering DNR’s Natural Areas Program as a receiving agency, keep in mind that **you may only nominate state trust land parcels that fall within an NAP or NRCA boundary (as designated through a formal boundary order)**. DNR currently is preparing a map of state trust lands that can be nominated for transfer into an NAP or NRCA for the 2025-27 biennium. The map will be posted on the [Selecting a Receiving Agency](#) webpage as soon as it is available. A fact sheet about the Natural Areas Program can be found in the appendix, and contact information for the program can be found on [DNR’s website](#).

When should I contact a receiving agency?

Once you identify a parcel you would like to nominate, DNR recommends you contact a receiving agency **as soon as possible**. For a receiving agency, accepting a parcel can be a major decision. The agency is accepting both the land and the responsibility and expense of managing that land for years into the

future. This decision takes time. Receiving agencies may need to work through their own planning process, which includes understanding how the parcel fits into long-term management plans and agency budgets, and also conduct outreach within and outside of their organization. Some receiving agencies can work through this process in weeks to months, while others may need a year or longer.

Be sure to ask the receiving agency how much time they realistically need to make this decision. If the process will take many months, you may need to delay your application until the next biennium.

DNR recommends that you work closely with the receiving agency to prepare the application. Refer to Section Three for more information.

Does the receiving agency have to buy the parcel?

No, the receive agency does not purchase the parcel; it is transferred to them directly. DNR will pay for standard transaction-related expenses, such as the appraisal, out of the legislative appropriation. However, the receiving agency will be responsible for all costs related to the parcel's long-term management once the transfer is complete.

**Stone tower on Mount Constitution,
Moran State Park**
Photo courtesy State Parks



Section Three

Preparing an Application

This section provides instructions on how to fill out an application for nominating a parcel for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program.

The parcel application

To nominate a parcel for the TLT Program, you will need to submit a parcel application on or before the application deadline listed on [DNR's website](#). The application must be signed by the applicant and a representative of the [receiving agency](#). A copy of the application is located in the Appendix. You also may download it from any TLT page on [DNR's website](#).

The following materials should be submitted along with your application:

- A map of the proposed parcel (**required**). Include section boundary lines for geographic reference. DNR will create a polygon in its GIS data system based on the information you provide, and may contact you to verify that the polygon is correct.
- A letter of intent from the receiving agency to accept and manage the parcel (**required**). The letter must be signed by someone within the receiving agency who has the authority to accept the transferred parcel.
- Letters of support from the community, receiving agency, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, or others. Letters of support are **optional, but strongly recommended**. If you need more time to obtain letters of support, they can be submitted to DNR separately after the application deadline, but before the advisory committee meets to prioritize the parcel list. A final deadline for the letters is listed on [DNR's website](#).

Please do not include additional materials in your application package, such as brochures, meeting minutes, presentations, fact sheets, press releases, and similar items. These materials will not be reviewed or considered in DNR's review or the advisory committee's scoring process. Also, do not send photos. Photos of the parcel can be included in the presentation you will give to the advisory committee. This presentation is discussed in Section Four of this manual.

Filling out your application

Working with the receiving agency

DNR strongly recommends you work with the [receiving agency](#) to complete your application, for two reasons:

- The receiving agency may already be interested in acquiring the proposed parcel. If they are, they may have a wealth of information that can be included in the application. For example, they may have a list of community organizations who support the transfer, information on the parcel's ecological attributes, and a good understanding of the parcel's public benefits.
- The application includes a series of questions about how the receiving agency will manage the parcel. In addition, the primary contact at the receiving agency must co-sign the application.

Remember the Pre-nomination Meeting!

DNR requires a pre-nomination meeting for parcels that are 4,500 acres or larger, or have an estimated value of \$15 million or more. DNR also strongly recommends a pre-nomination meeting for any parcel, regardless of its total size or value, that includes 1,000 acres or more of State Forestlands. The meeting must include the applicant, DNR, and the receiving agency who will receive and manage the parcel.

If you need a meeting, be sure to schedule it right away. The meeting must occur at least one month before the application period opens. Contact DNR to make arrangements. Names and phone numbers of DNR staff are listed under [Contacts on DNR's website](#).

Contact information

Provide contact information for yourself and the receiving agency.

A receiving agency also can serve as an applicant. In this case, the receiving agency primary contact name and applicant contact name could be the same. The primary contact at the receiving agency does not have to be the same person who signs the letter of intent.

Parcel location, zoning, and description

Provide the parcel location, including the township, range, section, county, and zoning. If the parcel crosses county boundaries, provide this information for the portion of the parcel that falls in each county.

In most cases, receiving agencies can help you determine the zoning. If not, you can determine zoning by contacting the zoning office in the county in which the parcel is located.

Provide the estimated, total number of acres in the proposed parcel, to the best of your knowledge. Also provide the estimated number of acres of State Forestlands in the parcel. DNR understands that these numbers may not be exact. The County Assessor may be a good place to begin your research; another resource is DNR's [GIS portal](#).

Describe the parcel to the best of your ability. The description will help members of the advisory committee understand the parcel and why it is a good fit for the TLT program.

Addressing the prioritization criteria

In your application, you must answer questions about four of the five prioritization criteria that the advisory committee will use to score your parcel. The fifth criterion, tribal support, will be scored with a summary of tribal outreach that DNR will provide to the advisory committee. These scores will be used to place the parcel into a prioritized order; refer to Section Five of this manual for more information.

Following is a brief description of each prioritization criterion and how it will be scored. Many criteria also have a multiplier, which is used to give some criteria more weight than others. As explained previously, the receiving agency could be a great source of information for these criteria. Another source of information is DNR's [GIS portal](#). Refer to Section Five for more information on scoring. Criteria are presented in **alphabetical order**.

Criterion One: Community Involvement and Support

This criterion addresses how much public outreach has occurred about the transfer, and whether the community supports or opposes the transfer. When scoring your parcel for this criterion, the advisory committee also will consider letters of support from the community, receiving agency, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, and/or others. This criterion does not address tribal support, which is scored separately as Criterion Five.



Lake Sammamish State Park

Photo courtesy of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks).

Outreach should include overburdened communities⁵, underserved populations⁶, or vulnerable populations⁷. A good resource is Washington State's [Department of Equity and Inclusion](#).

The following table indicates how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 2	
0 points	No local communities identified or impacted; or no evidence of community involvement and support; or community opposition to this proposed transfer.
1-2 points	Minimal community involvement and support.
3-4 points	Moderate community involvement and support.
5 points	Exceptional community involvement and support.

Criterion Two: Ecological Values

Ecological values are the water, minerals, biota, and other factors that make up natural ecosystems and support native life forms. Examples of high ecological values include habitat for sensitive, threatened, and endangered species, and forests that meet the definition of old growth in DNR's [Policy for Sustainable Forests](#). This criterion also considers how the receiving agency will manage the parcel to maintain these ecological values.

The following table shows how this criterion will be scored.

⁵ **Overburdened community:** A geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in [RCW 19.405.020](#) (ESSSB 5141 Sec. 2 (11)). "Highly impacted community" means a community designated by the department of health based on cumulative impact analyses in RCW [19.405.140](#) or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.

⁶ **Underserved populations:** Populations who face barriers in accessing victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location or religion, underserved racial or ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age) and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate (34 USC § 12291(a)(39)).

⁷ **Vulnerable populations:** Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms ([ESSSB 5141 Sec. 2 \(14\)](#)). "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to: (i) Racial or ethnic minorities; 11 (ii) Low-income populations; 12 13 (iii) Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and 14 15 (iv) Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 3	
0 points	No ecological values described.
1-2 points	The parcel has only minor ecological values and the receiving agency has some capacity to maintain or enhance those values.
3-4 points	The parcel has moderate ecological values and the receiving agency has capacity to maintain or enhance those values.
5 points	The parcel has significant ecological values and the receiving agency has capacity to maintain or enhance those values.

Criterion Three: Economic Values

The potential positive or negative economic impact of the proposed transfer on local economic industries and the extent of those impacts. For example, a transfer may benefit local industries by attracting more people to the area, who may purchase meals, supplies, gas, lodging, and other items during their visit. If the impacts are negative, consider possible ways these impacts could be mitigated.

The following table shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: None	
0 points	No economic impacts, no information on economic impacts provided, or negative economic impacts without potential mitigation strategies.
1-2 points	Minor positive economic impacts or negative economic impacts with viable mitigation strategies, or competing positive and negative impacts of two or more industries or the local economy.
3-4 points	Moderate positive economic impacts to one or more economic industries or the local economy.
5 points	Exceptional positive economic impacts to one or more economic industries or the local economy.

Criterion Four: Public Benefits

A public benefit is something that has a positive effect on the general public or one or more groups of people. The benefits can either exist now, and continue after the transfer occurs, or exist in the future as a result of the transfer. Examples of public benefits include a park, open space, nature preserve, or similar designation; recreational opportunities; and opportunities for scientific research or outdoor education. This criterion includes consideration of how the transfer might benefit overburdened communities, underserved populations, or vulnerable populations.

The following table shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 3	
0 points	No public benefits provided.
1-2 points	The parcel has minimal public benefits now, and/or the transfer would provide a minor increase in public benefits.
3-4 points	The parcel has moderate public benefits now, and/or the transfer would provide a moderate increase in public benefits.
5 points	The parcel has exceptional public benefits now, and/or the transfer would provide an exceptional increase in public benefits.

Criterion Five: Tribal Support

This criterion is meant to gauge the level of tribal support or opposition to the proposed transfer. As part of the eligibility determination, DNR and the receiving agency together will conduct outreach to tribes who may be interested in or potentially affected by the transfer. After this outreach is complete, DNR will summarize the efforts made to contact the tribes regarding the proposed transfer, including which tribes were contacted. DNR also will summarize whether the tribes supported or opposed the proposed transfer and why. Examples of support could include endorsements, letters of support, or involvement in the development of the proposal. As mentioned previously, you do not need to address this criterion in your application.

The following table shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 3	
0 points	One or more contacted tribes opposed this proposal.
1-4 points	Tribes were non-responsive and/or responded with a mix of neutral and supportive comments towards this proposal. NOTE: The advisory committee will award 3 points if contact was made and no tribes responded.
5 points	Tribes that responded were strongly supportive of this proposal.

Receiving agency questions

DNR recommends that you work with the receiving agency on this section of the application. The information on how the receiving agency will manage the parcel will help the advisory committee score the parcel.

Summary statement

The summary statement brings everything together for the advisory committee. Summarize why you believe this parcel is a good candidate for the TLT Program. Emphasize the key points you made in your responses to the prioritization criteria, and briefly touch on how the parcel will be managed to preserve its ecological values and public benefits.

Signatories

Make sure you sign the application. The application should also be reviewed and signed by the primary contact at the receiving agency. As noted earlier, the primary contact does not have to be the same person who signs the receiving agency's letter of intent.

Who can help me with my application?

Names, email addresses, and phone numbers of land transaction specialists are listed under Contacts on [DNR's website](#).

Submitting your application package

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, your application packet includes the application, letter of intent from the receiving agency, a map, and letters of support, if you have them. Submit your application packet to dnrtltprogram@dnr.wa.gov by the date and time listed on [DNR's website](#).

What happens next?

DNR will notify all successful applicants and receiving agencies (via email) that the nominated parcel will move to the next step in the TLT process, prioritization. For each eligible parcel, DNR will post the application package and a summary of the best interests of the trusts analysis on the [Proposed and Current Transfers](#) page of DNR's website.

DNR will not cease revenue-generating activities, if any, on the nominated parcel until the Board of Natural Resources has reviewed the prioritized list of parcels and given its consent for sending the list to the Legislature for funding.

During prioritization, the applicant will be asked to give a short presentation to the advisory committee about the proposed parcel. Refer to Section Five of this manual for more information.

If your application is not accepted, DNR will send you an email explaining why. Unsuccessful applications can be improved and resubmitted in the next biennium. All emails regarding application status will be sent before the advisory committee meets (refer to Section Five).

Section Four

Determination of Eligibility

This section includes the following:

- What DNR looks for in a receiving agency
 - How DNR determines if a transfer is in the best interests of the trust beneficiaries
 - The purpose of outreach to tribes and tax districts
-

A thorough process

DNR examines each proposed transfer carefully and in detail to determine if it is eligible for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program:

- DNR verifies that each parcel has a receiving agency who can accept the parcel and manage it.
- DNR will analyze the parcel to determine if the transfer is in the best interests of the trust beneficiaries. Proposed transfers that do not have a receiving agency or are not in the trusts' best interests will be removed from consideration.
- DNR will conduct outreach to tribes and (if the transfer includes State Forestlands) affected counties and their taxing districts for all remaining parcels.
- DNR will make a final determination of eligibility based on all the information gathered during this process.

This chapter will explain each of these steps.

What does DNR look for in a receiving agency?

DNR will ensure that the [receiving agency](#) is willing and able to accept the parcel. DNR will read the letter of intent, check the signature on the application, and contact the receiving agency with any questions. Applications that lack a receiving agency will not go forward in this process.

How does DNR determine if a transfer is in the best interests of the trust beneficiaries?

DNR will conduct a “best interests of the trusts” analysis on all parcels that have receiving agencies. This analysis is focused on the nominated parcel’s potential to generate revenue for trust beneficiaries:

- DNR will determine how the parcel is currently being used, and how much revenue those activities are generating now (if any).
- DNR will examine each parcel through multiple lenses to assess its potential for generating revenue into the future.

Following are a few examples of what DNR considers in this analysis. DNR considers all of these factors together when deciding if a transfer is in the best interests of the trust beneficiaries.

Current uses

DNR will determine whether the parcel is generating revenue now. DNR will check for planned, sold, or recently completed timber sales, and leases for agriculture, grazing, or other uses.

Existing uses may or may not exclude a parcel from consideration for transfer. Some uses may not generate enough revenue to cover the cost of management. Even if current revenue does cover management costs, revenue may be so low that it makes more financial sense to transfer and replace the parcel. Current uses may be difficult to impossible to continue into the future because of surrounding land uses, changes in zoning, or other issues.

Site productivity

For all parcels, DNR will consider the site’s topography and annual rainfall and how that affects revenue-generating activities. For forested parcels, DNR also will determine the site class, which indicates the site’s capacity to grow repeated crops of commercial timber. For example, steep, mountainous parcels at high elevations often have poor soils on which trees grow very slowly.

Operability

For forested parcels, DNR will determine the percentage of the parcel that can be harvested under state and federal laws and DNR policies. Examples of lands that cannot be harvested include streams and associated buffers, unstable slopes, forests defined as old growth per DNR's [*Policy for Sustainable Forests*](#), natural forests being managed as gene pool reserves, marbled murrelet occupied sites, and other sensitive areas.

Water rights and facilities

For agricultural properties, DNR will determine whether the parcel has water rights and facilities such as wells, water pipelines, or water storage tanks.

Access and surrounding area

DNR will determine if the parcel has road and legal access or the ability to attain access. DNR also will consider how transfer of the parcel could affect access to, or management of, adjacent state trust lands.

DNR also will consider other factors that could influence management, such as current public uses of the parcel, the parcel's proximity to urban or residential areas, surrounding land uses, current zoning, and development trends in the local area. For example, forested parcels that are completely surrounded by dense urban development may be difficult to manage for timber production or other revenue-generating activities.

Other opportunities

In addition to current uses, DNR also will determine if the parcel could generate sustainable, long-term revenue for trust beneficiaries under uses that are different than those occurring on the parcel right now. For example, some agricultural lands may be ideal for wind or solar power generation. DNR will keep surrounding area issues in mind when making this determination.

DNR also will determine if the TLT program is the best way to reposition the parcel. For example, some parcels can be sold or exchanged with another land owner.

Valuation estimate

As part of this analysis, DNR will estimate the fair market value of the parcel. Fair market value is based on the highest and best use of the property and includes the value of land, timber, other valuable materials, and improvements owned by the state.

Making a final determination

At the conclusion of this analysis, DNR will make a careful and well-considered decision on whether a transfer is in the trusts' best interest. This decision will be based on *all* of the information gathered during this analysis. Any transfer that is not in the trust's best interest will be removed from consideration for the TLT program. DNR will post a summary of this analysis on the.

Who performs tribal outreach?

DNR and the receiving agency together will meet with affected tribes to gather their feedback and concerns about proposed transfers. Tribal outreach will be conducted on all transfers that are considered to be in the trusts' best interests.

Why does DNR conduct outreach to counties and taxing districts for State Forestland transfers?

In addition to tribal outreach, DNR also will conduct outreach to counties and their taxing districts on all transfers that are in the trust's best interests *and* include State Forestlands.

The beneficiaries of State Forestlands are the counties in which these lands are located. When a timber harvest occurs on State Forestlands, DNR provides the revenue to the county. The county then distributes the revenue to individual taxing districts within the county according to [RCW 79.64.110](#). Taxing districts are organizations that have the legal authority to impose property taxes to fund ports, schools, roads, parks, public transit, and other public services.

Many taxing districts depend heavily on trust revenue and can be disproportionately impacted by TLTs. For that reason, it is very important to gather their feedback before making a final decision on eligibility.

What happens next?

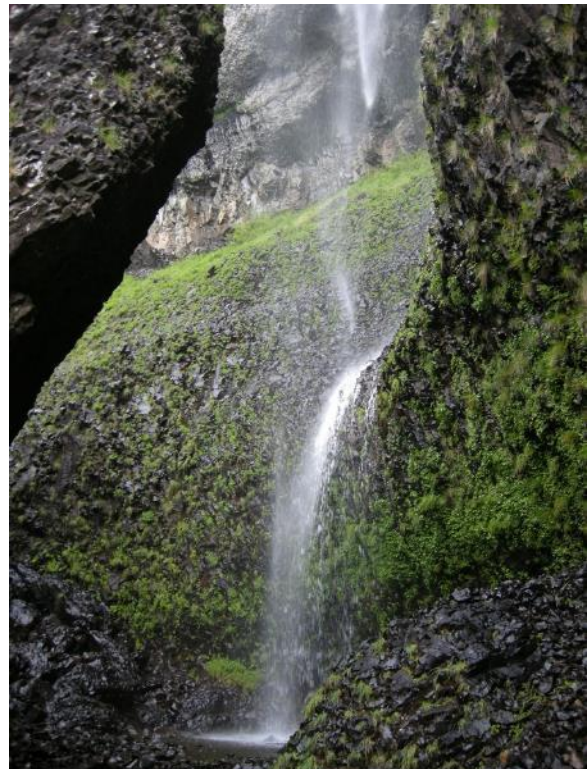
After outreach is completed, DNR will make a final decision on eligibility.

On the [Proposed and Current Transfers page](#) of DNR's website, DNR will post the application, map, and a summary of the best interests of the trusts analysis for each eligible transfer. In addition, DNR will email all applicants with the results of its eligibility analysis.

- If a parcel is eligible for the TLT program, DNR will ask the applicant to give a short presentation about the parcel at an advisory committee meeting. Guidelines for this presentation can be found in Section Four of this manual. In this or a subsequent email, DNR will let you know when the advisory committee meeting will occur.

- If a parcel is not eligible for transfer, DNR will explain why. Applicants can improve their applications and resubmit them for consideration in the next biennium, but they cannot resubmit them for consideration in the current biennium. Refer to Section 1, Page 4 of this manual for information on the TLT timeline.

All eligible parcels will advance to the next step in the TLT process, prioritization. Prioritization is discussed in Section Five of this manual.



**DNR-managed Columbia Falls
Natural Area Preserve**

Section Five

Prioritization

This section includes the following:

- Why the parcels proposed for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program are prioritized
 - How the parcels are prioritized
 - Who serves on the advisory committee and how to apply
-

By this point in the TLT process, DNR has a working list of eligible transfers. Before this list can be submitted to the Washington State Legislature for funding, however, it must be prioritized.

Why are the parcels prioritized?

Every biennium, the Legislature receives numerous, competing requests for funding. In addition, pandemics, economic downturns, and other challenges can affect the total amount of funding available in the budget for TLT and other funding requests.

Therefore, DNR may or may not receive enough funding to transfer all of the parcels on the list. If it does not, DNR must decide which parcels to transfer, and in what order. For that reason, the list of parcels must be prioritized.

How is the list prioritized?

The list is prioritized using the following, three-step process.

Step One: Parcel Review

In this step, the advisory committee will meet to review the parcels. Applicants will be asked to give a short presentation on their proposed transfer and answer questions. Applicants should follow these guidelines:

- Keep the presentation under 15 minutes.
- If using PowerPoint or similar software, include 15 or fewer slides.
- At a minimum, include the following information in your presentation:

- Your name and the name of the receiving agency.
- The parcel name, the county in which it is located, how it is zoned, and the size of the parcel in acres.
- The parcel map.
- The number of acres of State Forestlands in the parcel (if any).
- Why you believe this parcel is a good candidate for TL. Include highlights from your application on why the parcel should score well under the first four criteria (community involvement and support, ecological values, economic values, and public benefits).
- How the receiving agency plans to manage the parcel to protect ecological values and public benefits.
- Any other information you feel the advisory committee needs to score your parcel.
- Photos of the parcel if you have them. Photos are not required but help the advisory committee understand the parcel's unique attributes.

Step Two: Scoring

Second, the advisory committee will score the parcels for each criterion. For the first four criteria, scoring will be based on the presentation and the application package, which includes any letters of support received from local citizens, local organizations, local elected officials, interest groups, volunteers, public agencies, and/or others. DNR will provide the advisory committee a summary of comments from tribal outreach. The advisory committee will use this summary to score Criterion Five, tribal support.

Committee members will score the parcels on their own (not during the meeting). They will award 0 to 5 points for each criterion. Most scores also have a multiplier. The purpose of the multiplier is to give some criteria more weight than others. For example, if a criterion is awarded 3 points and it has a multiplier of 2, the final score for that criterion is six points. The following table lists the total maximum score possible for each criterion. Criteria are listed in **alphabetical** order.

Criteria	Maximum score	Multiplier	Total maximum score
One: Community involvement and support	5	2	10
Two: Ecological values	5	3	15
Three: Economic values	5	N/A	5
Four: Public benefits	5	3	15
Five: Tribal support	5	3	15

Step Three: Tabulation and Review

Once DNR receives the scores from each advisory committee member, DNR will sum and average the scores for each parcel and use the scores to place the parcels in order of priority. The higher the score, the higher the priority. DNR will meet with the advisory committee to review the results.

What happens next?

Once the advisory committee has completed its work, DNR will submit the list to the [Board of Natural Resources](#). The Board will review the list and either approve it as presented, or make changes to it. For example, the Board may move parcels up or down in priority, or remove parcels from the list. They also may suggest adding a parcel to the list. However, that parcel would need to go through the full TLT process. If this occurs, DNR will recommend that the proposed parcel be considered for a subsequent biennium.

Once the Board has approved sending the list to the Legislature for funding, DNR will prepare and submit a funding request. Refer to Section Six of this manual for more information.

Who serves on the advisory committee?

Anyone can serve on the advisory committee. Being on the advisory committee is a great opportunity for hands-on involvement in the TLT program. It also provides an opportunity for networking with others who are interested in natural resource management in Washington.

How long does each term last?

Advisory committee members will serve four years.

What is the time commitment for being on the advisory committee?

The committee will meet three to six times each biennium:

- One or two meetings to provide background information on DNR and trust land transfer, and provide instructions on how to score the parcels. Meeting(s) will be one to two hours long.
- At least one all-day meeting to review the parcels and listen to the presentations; the number of all-day meetings will depend on the number of eligible parcels under consideration.
- One, one-hour meeting to review the prioritized list and gather feedback.

The amount of time necessary to score the applications will depend on the number of eligible parcels under consideration. For example, if it takes half an hour to score each parcel, and there are 40 parcels, then scoring could require 20 hours. Scoring time will vary from person to person.

Is there a stipend available?

Unfortunately, no. This is a purely voluntary opportunity with no stipend.

Do I need any special qualifications?

No special qualifications are necessary to serve on the advisory committee.

How do I apply to be on the advisory committee?

DNR will provide instructions on how to apply on the [Advisory Committee webpage](#) at least one month before the application period for the advisory committee opens. On the webpage, DNR also will announce the dates of the application period.

Once DNR has received the applications, it will select 9-12 members who represent a broad range of perspectives, expertise, affiliations, and geographic areas within the state. Members will be approved by the Commissioner of Public Lands. DNR will email all applicants to inform them whether or not they have been selected for the advisory committee.

When will the advisory committee meet?

The advisory committee meets during the spring and summer of the second calendar year of each biennium. The second calendar year of the biennium is always an even-numbered year. Figure 2 below shows when the advisory committee will meet to score parcels for the 2025-27 and 2027-29 biennia.

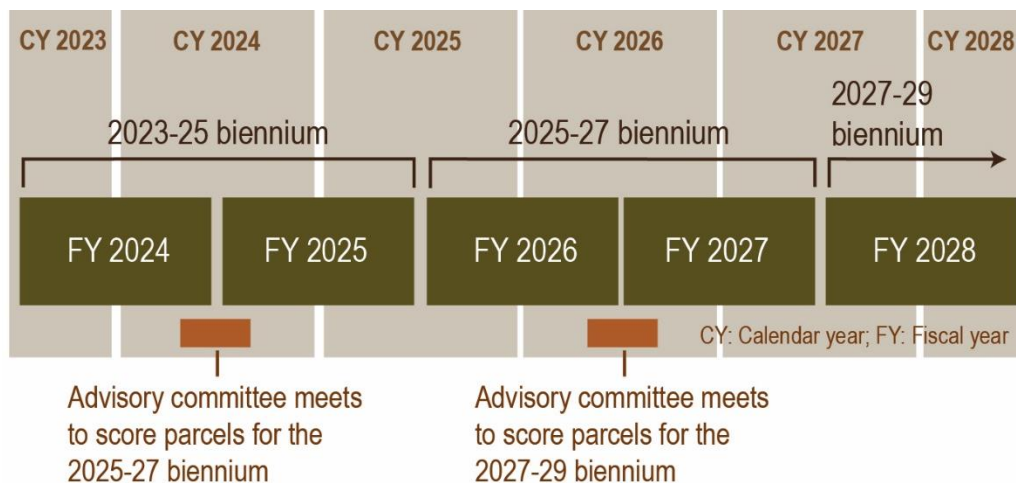


Figure 2. Example of when the advisory committee will meet to score parcels for the 2025-27 and 2027-29 biennium.

Section Six

Transfer and Replacement

This section includes the following:

- Information about the funding request that DNR submits to the Washington State Legislature for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program
 - How funded parcels are transferred
 - How transferred parcels are replaced
-

Submitting a Funding Request

DNR will submit a funding request to the Washington State Legislature for the combined, estimated fair market value of all the proposed parcels on the prioritized list⁸. Fair market value is based on the highest and best use of the property, and includes the value of land, timber, other valuable materials, and improvements owned by the state. Fair market value is estimated during the best interests of the trusts analysis.

During the legislative session, the Legislature will consider DNR's funding request and set a funding level (not all parcels may be funded, as explained in Section Five). Once DNR receives funding, it will begin the transfer and replacement process for the legislatively approved and funded parcels.

⁸ The funding request that DNR submits to the Legislature must be in compliance with Section 2(6) of [SHB 1460](#), which stipulates that the total, combined value of all the parcels on the list cannot exceed \$30 million. Per SHB 1460, DNR cannot submit a new list of parcels for funding unless 50 percent of all previous appropriations for the TLT program have been used to purchase replacement trust lands.

Transfer

DNR will present each legislatively approved and funded parcel to the Board of Natural resources for their approval. Once approved, each parcel will be transferred directly to the receiving agency. The receiving agency does not purchase the land, and all of DNR's standard transfer-related expenses, such as the appraisal, will be funded through the legislative appropriation. The receiving agency will be responsible for all costs associated with future management of the parcel once the transfer is complete.

Some deed restrictions will be placed upon the parcel when it is transferred. Restrictions may include mineral reservations ([RCW 79.11.210](#)), ability to purchase road access ([RCW 79.36.370](#)), specific easement reservations to protect remaining state trust lands, and/or restrictions on future, permitted uses of the property for the grantee (receiving agency) and their successors (in the event the parcel is conveyed to a new owner, or the receiving agency changes their name). Use restrictions will be based on the specific legislation that authorizes and funds the transfer. DNR also may consider a DNR proprietary use and management restriction on the parcel associated with DNR's [State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan](#) (HCP). DNR will consult the intended TLT recipient on any proposed, proprietary HCP encumbrance language prior to the transfer.

DNR will transfer parcels in order of priority whenever possible. However, the Legislature has the discretion to select which parcels on the list to fund. In doing so, they may or may not choose the parcels in order of priority. For example, they may skip higher priority parcels to select a parcel further down the list.

Parcels that are not funded or transferred can be resubmitted for consideration in the next biennium.

Replacement

At the time of transfer, DNR will conduct a formal appraisal of each funded parcel. The appraised value will differ from the estimated property value used during the application process.

The appraised value of each parcel will be deposited into the following state accounts, depending on the type of state trust lands being transferred:

- For federally granted lands, the appraised value will be deposited into the [Real Property Replacement Account](#).
- For State Forestlands, the appraised value will be deposited into the [Parkland Trust Revolving Account](#).

DNR will use the funding in these accounts to purchase replacement lands for the affected trust as quickly as practicable. For example, if DNR transferred a Common School Trust parcel with an appraised value of \$7 million, DNR will deposit \$7 million into the Real Property Replacement Account. DNR will use this funding to purchase replacement land specifically for the Common School Trust.

For State Forestlands only, affected counties have the flexibility to request a one-time payment that represents up to 100 percent of the proceeds associated with timber or other valuable materials on the parcel. Counties must submit a request in writing for these proceeds to the Board of Natural Resources. The remaining value of the parcel, including the land value, will be deposited into the Parkland Trust Revolving Account and used to purchase replacement land.

What does DNR look for in replacement lands?

For trust beneficiaries, the primary benefit of the TLT program is to improve the long-term revenue-generating potential of the state trust lands portfolio. To accomplish this, DNR selects replacement lands that offer higher projected financial returns to trust beneficiaries than the land being transferred. DNR also looks for lands with good potential for asset appreciation.

For replacement of federally granted lands, DNR will prioritize the purchase of working forests and farms when DNR's fiduciary obligations to the trust beneficiaries can be better fulfilled with these lands. State Forestlands can be replaced only with forested lands that can be managed for timber production.

Following are some of the specific traits DNR looks for in replacement land.

- Legal and physical road access, or the ability to attain access.
- As few legal and financial encumbrances as possible, such as areas that must be managed for threatened and endangered species.
- Productive soils and other good physical traits for the state's intended use.
- Proximity to other blocks of state trust lands.
- Lack of conflicts with surrounding land uses; for example, properties that are far from densely populated areas, not currently being heavily used for recreation, and not in areas slated for future urban development that would be incompatible with trust management.
- Zoning that does not conflict with revenue-production activities.

For State Forestlands, DNR looks for replacement lands that are within the same tax district as the parcel being transferred. If no replacement lands are available in that area, DNR will search for replacement lands within the same county.

Appendix

This appendix includes three documents:

- Parcel application
- Prioritization criteria summary
- Natural areas factsheet

These documents are also available on the [TLT website](#) under “Files.”

Trust Land Transfer Program Parcel Application

Trust Land Transfer Program Parcel Application Cover Sheet

Date:

Name of parcel:

County/counties in which parcel is located:

Contact Information

Provide contact information as indicated below. All fields are required unless indicated otherwise.

A receiving agency also can serve as an applicant, in which case the receiving agency primary contact name and applicant name would be the same. The primary contact at the receiving agency does not need to be the same person who signs the receiving agency's letter of intent.

➤ Applicant

Name:

Professional affiliation (if any):

Job title (if any):

Mailing address*:

Best phone number to reach you:

Email address:

*Optional

➤ Receiving Agency

Name of receiving agency:

Mailing address:

Primary contact name:

Job title:

Primary contact phone number:

Primary contact email address:

Trust Land Transfer Program Parcel Application

Fill out this application to nominate a parcel of state trust lands for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) Program. All fields are required. Submit the following attachments with your application:

- A map of the proposed parcel. Include section boundary lines for geographic reference so DNR can map the parcel in its GIS data system.
- A letter of intent from the receiving agency to accept and manage the parcel (required). The letter must be signed by someone at the receiving agency who has the authority to accept the transferred parcel.
- Letters of support from the community, receiving agency, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, or others. Letters of support are optional but strongly recommended. If you need more time to obtain letters of support, you may submit them separately from your application. Letters should be sent to dnrtltprogram@dnr.wa.gov no later than April 1, 2024.

Submit this application, including the cover sheet and requested attachments, to dnrtltprogram@dnr.wa.gov by 5pm on September 30, 2023. Make sure the application is signed by both the applicant and the primary contact at the receiving agency. The primary contact does not have to be the same person who signs the receiving agency letter of intent.

Please do not send attachments that are not specifically requested in this application, such as fact sheets, press releases, or other materials. These additional attachments will not be reviewed or provided to the advisory committee for use in scoring. Also, do not send photos. If your parcel is considered eligible for the TLT program, you will be asked to give a presentation to the advisory committee; photos can be included in your presentation.

For more information on the TLT program and instructions for filling out this application, visit www.dnr.wa.gov/managed-lands/land-transactions/trust-land-transfer.

Part A: Parcel, Applicant, and Receiving Agency Names

Date:

Name of parcel:

Applicant name:

Name of receiving agency:

Name of primary contact at receiving agency:

Part B: Parcel Information

Parcel Location and Zoning

If the entire parcel is in one county, fill out the top three lines only. If the parcel crosses county boundaries, provide information for the portion of the parcel that is located in each county.

County in which parcel is located:

Township, range, and section:

Current zoning:

County in which parcel is located:

Township, range, and section:

Current zoning:

County in which parcel is located:

Township, range, and section:

Current zoning:

Total, estimated number of acres in proposed parcel:

Does this parcel include State Forestlands?

Yes No

If yes, approximately how many acres of State Forestlands does this parcel include?

Parcels that are worth \$15 million or more, or have 4,500 or more total acres require a pre-nomination meeting with DNR and the receiving agency before July 1, 2023.

If your parcel meets this criteria, indicate the date on which the meeting occurred:

DNR strongly recommends a pre-nomination meeting with DNR and the receiving agency for parcels that include 1,000 acres or more of State Forestlands, regardless of the parcel's total size or value. The meeting should take place before July 1, 2023.

If your parcel meets this criteria, did you attend a pre-nomination meeting?

Yes No

Date on which the meeting occurred:

Parcel Description

Describe the topography. For example, is the parcel flat, hilly, or mountainous?

What is the dominate vegetation type (for example, forested, grassland, shrub-steppe)? If forested, is the entire parcel forested or does the parcel have a mix of forest and open areas?

Are there barns, boat launches, public restrooms, or other facilities on the parcel? If yes, describe. If the parcel has been leased for agriculture or other uses, describe any improvements the leaseholder has made, if known.

Describe any unique physical features of the parcel, such as local landmarks or water bodies.

Part C: Prioritization Criteria

In the following section, address four of the five prioritization criteria that the advisory committee will use to prioritize the parcels for transfer¹. Answer all questions succinctly. Refer to the [prioritization criteria summary](#) for information on how each criterion is scored.

This application does not include Criterion Five, tribal support. DNR and the receiving agency together will conduct tribal outreach and provide a summary of comments received to the advisory committee in a separate document.

DNR records and files are subject to the Public Records Act ([RCW 52.46](#)). In addition, DNR will post applications for eligible parcels on its website. Do not include any confidential or sensitive information in your application that cannot be made public. For example, do not provide specific location information for rare or unique plants or specific descriptions and location information for archaeological sites, artifacts, or other sensitive cultural resources.

To protect personal contact information such as email addresses and phone numbers, the cover sheet on this application will be removed before the application is posted.

➤ ***Criteria One: Community Involvement and Support***

This criterion gauges the level of community involvement and support for transfer of the proposed parcel. This criterion does not address tribal support. As noted above, tribal support is assessed through a separate process.

When scoring your parcel for this criterion, the advisory committee will consider letters of support from local citizens, local organizations, local elected officials, interest groups, volunteers, public agencies, and others, in addition to the information in your application. These letters are optional but encouraged. You may provide these letters to DNR with your application, or send them to DNR separately from your application package by April 1, 2024.

¹ Some deed restrictions will be placed upon the parcel when it is transferred. Restrictions may include mineral reservations (RCW 79.11.210), ability to purchase road access (RCW 79.36.370), specific easement reservations to protect remaining state trust lands, and/or restrictions on future, permitted uses of the property for the grantee (receiving agency) and their successors (in the event the parcel is conveyed to a new owner, or the receiving agency changes their name). Use restrictions will be based on the specific legislation that authorizes and funds the transfer. DNR also may consider a DNR proprietary use and management restriction on the parcel associated with DNR's *State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan* (HCP). DNR will consult the intended TLT recipient on any proposed, proprietary HCP encumbrance language prior to the transfer.

Has the community been provided an opportunity to learn about the proposed transfer and share their thoughts? If yes, describe efforts made to engage with the community.

Describe the level of involvement and support from the community for the transfer, including local citizens, local organizations, local elected officials, interest groups, volunteers, public agencies, and others.

Explain any known opposition to the transfer and any efforts to mitigate or address this opposition. Provide an explanation of why the transfer should move forward despite any community opposition.

Describe any outreach efforts specifically to overburdened communities, underserved populations, or vulnerable populations, and summarize any feedback received from these groups.

➤ *Criteria Two: Ecological Values*

Ecological values are the water, minerals, biota, and other factors that make up natural ecosystems and support native life forms. Examples of high ecological values include but are not limited to the following:

- Habitat for fish and wildlife species, including federal or state endangered, threatened, or sensitive species; and/or wide-ranging migratory species, especially winter range for these species.
- Opportunities to create larger blocks of high-quality habitat.

- Federal or state endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant species.
- Forests that meet the definition of old growth in DNR's *Policy for Sustainable Forests*.
- Other ecological traits that make this parcel significant on a global, regional, state, ecosystem, or watershed level.

Describe the specific ecological values of the proposed transfer. Include the ecological and biological quality of wildlife habitat and the habitat's role in supporting these species. If discussing endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant species, do not provide specific location information.

Describe the proximity of this parcel to other conserved areas (public, private, or tribal). Will this transfer create larger blocks of quality habitat?

Describe the stewardship or management practices of the receiving agency to perpetuate the ecological values of the parcel. For example, does the agency have the ability to manage, monitor, and protect these values once the parcel is transferred? How would the parcel fit within long-term management plans?

➤ **Criteria Three: Economic Values**

This criterion addresses the potential positive or negative economic impact of the proposed transfer on local economic industries and the extent of those impacts. Examples of economic industries include but are not limited to the following:

- Local recreation
- Local tourism
- Forest products
- Non-forest products
- Local public services
- Shellfish
- Agriculture

In your answer, do not address the impacts to local industries of ceasing DNR's trust management activities on the parcel, now or in the future. Examples of these activities include timber harvest or leases for agriculture, grazing, or other uses. If a parcel is being nominated for this program, chances are that few, if any, of these activities are occurring on the parcel now, and the potential for these activities occurring in the future is low. DNR assesses this potential in detail when it conducts the "best interests of the trusts" analysis.

Instead, address the potential economic implications (positive or negative) of the parcel becoming a park, open space, nature preserve, or similar designation. For example, will the transfer:

- Attract more visitors to the area, who will spend money with local businesses?
- Provide additional protection of water resources, which will protect a local fish or shellfish industry?
- Affect agriculture, timber harvest, grazing, or other revenue-generating activities currently occurring on adjacent or nearby private properties?

- Affect future development plans for the local area?
- Affect the delivery of public services, such as a water pipeline, transmission line, or other infrastructure?

Describe the positive economic values of this transfer.

Describe the negative economic values of this transfer, and any potential strategies for mitigating those impacts.

➤ **Criteria Four: Public Benefits**

A public benefit is something that has a positive effect on the general public or one or more groups of people. Examples of public benefits include but are not limited to the following:

- Park, open space, nature preserve, or similar designation
- Opportunities for resource-based recreation that are scarce or unavailable in the local area
- ADA-accessible recreation opportunities
- Distinctive scenic or aesthetic features
- Documented archeological, non-tribal cultural, or historically significant sites (Indicate if these features are present but do not describe them or indicate where on the parcel they are located)
- Scientific research opportunities and outdoor education opportunities

Describe the current public benefits provided by the parcel. Including any existing recreational uses.

Describe the public benefits that would result from the transfer. For example, transferring this parcel could expand existing public recreational access to the parcel, or provide new access.

Identify the communities that would be served by the parcel, including any overburdened community, underserved population, or vulnerable population that might receive direct public benefits from this transfer.

Describe how the proximity of the proposed transfer to these communities may increase the benefits you describe.

Cite any publicly reviewed or adopted plans that support the need for the public benefits identified. Provide a link to these plans if available.

Part D: Receiving Agency

How will the receiving agency manage this parcel? Will the parcel be managed as a park, open space, nature preserve, or similar designation? Include information on how you will preserve the parcel's ecological values and public benefits. If the parcel is forested, describe plans (if any) to maintain or improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk.

Is there a comprehensive or landscape management plan that would apply to this parcel once it is transferred? If yes, include a hyperlink to the plan, if available.

Has the acquisition of this parcel been identified in planning documents as a priority? If yes, briefly explain why.

How will the receiving agency fund the management of this parcel?

Part E: Summary Statement

In 300 words or fewer, summarize why you think this parcel is a good candidate for the TLT program.

Part F: Signatures

➤ **Applicant**

The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

Job Title (if any)

Professional affiliation (if any)

➤ **Receiving Agency***

*If the receiving agency is acting as the applicant, check this box and leave rest of this section blank.

I have reviewed this application and the information is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

Job Title

Professional affiliation (if any)

Part G: Glossary

Old-growth forest: Per DNR's *Policy for Sustainable Forests*, forest stands of at least 5 acres that are in the most structurally complex stage of stand development, sometimes referred to as the fully functional stage of stand development, with a natural origin date prior to 1850, generally considered the start of European settlement in the Pacific Northwest. Examples of structural complexity include multiple canopy layers, snags, gaps in the forest canopy, and fallen trees on the forest floor.

Overburdened community: A geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW 19.405.020 (ESSSB 5141 Sec. 2 (11)). "Highly impacted community" means a community designated by the department of health based on cumulative impact analyses in RCW 19.405.140 or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially in "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.

Resource-based outdoor recreation: Outdoor recreation that is dependent on a particular element or combination of elements in the natural and cultural environments that cannot be easily duplicated by humans. Examples include but are not limited to trail use, camping, boating, swimming, picnicking, and nature study.

Underserved populations: Populations who face barriers in accessing victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location or religion, underserved racial or ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age) and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate (34 USC § 12291(a)(39)).

Vulnerable populations: Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms (ESSSB 5141 Sec. 2 (14)). "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to: (i) Racial or ethnic minorities; 11 (ii) Low-income populations; 12 13 (iii) Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and 14 15 (iv) Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

Prioritization Criteria Summary

Prioritization Criteria

This document describes the five criteria that the advisory committee will use to score the parcels that are eligible for the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program¹. DNR will sum and average the scores for each parcel. The higher the score, the higher the priority.

Advisory committee members will award 0 to 5 points for each criterion. Most criteria also have a multiplier. The purpose of the multiplier is to give some criteria more weight than others.

The following table lists the **total maximum score** possible for each criterion. Criteria are listed in **alphabetical order**.

Criteria	Maximum score	Multiplier	Total maximum score
One: Community Involvement and Support	5	2	10
Two: Ecological Values	5	3	15
Three: Economic Values	5	N/A	5
Four: Public Benefits	5	3	15
Five: Tribal Support	5	3	15

Advisory committee members will score the parcels based on the information in the application package, letters of support, the applicant’s presentation to the advisory committee, and the tribal outreach summary that DNR will provide to the committee. Committee members will score each parcel on its own merits, rather than score the parcels against each other.

Following is a description of each criterion and how it is scored.

Criterion One: Community Involvement and Support

This criterion gauges the level of community involvement and support for the proposed transfer. This criterion does not address tribal support, which is scored separately as Criterion Five.

Applicants must address the following in their application:

- Whether the local community has been provided an opportunity to learn about the proposed transfer and share their thoughts, and the efforts that have been made to engage with them.
- The level of involvement and support from the community, including local citizens, local organizations, local elected officials, interest groups, volunteers, public agencies, and others.
- Any known opposition to the transfer, any efforts to mitigate or address this opposition, and why the transfer should move forward despite any community opposition.
- Any outreach efforts specifically to overburdened communitiesⁱⁱ, underserved populationsⁱⁱⁱ, or vulnerable populations^{iv}, and feedback received from these groups.

Applicants are encouraged to provide letters of support for the transfer from local citizens, local organizations, local elected officials, interest groups, volunteers, public agencies, or others. These letters will help the advisory committee score the parcels for this criterion.

The table below shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 2	
0 points	No local communities identified or impacted; or no evidence of community involvement and support; or community opposition to this proposed transfer
1-2 points	Minimal community involvement and support
3-4 points	Moderate community involvement and support
5 points	Exceptional community involvement and support

Criterion Two: Ecological Values

Ecological values are the water, minerals, biota, and other factors that make up natural ecosystems and support native life forms. Examples of high ecological values include but are not limited to the following:

- Habitat for fish and wildlife species, including federal or state endangered, threatened, or sensitive species; and/or wide-ranging migratory species, especially winter range for these species.
- Opportunities to create larger blocks of high-quality habitat.
- Federal or state endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant species.
- Forests that meet the definition of old growth in DNR's *Policy for Sustainable Forests*^v.

- Other ecological traits that make this parcel significant on a global, regional, state, ecosystem, or watershed level.

Applicants must provide the following information in their applications:

- The specific ecological values of the proposed transfer, including the ecological and biological quality of wildlife habitat and the habitat’s role in supporting these species, and the presence and extent of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plant communities on the parcel.
- The proximity of this parcel to other conserved areas (public, private, or tribal), and whether this transfer create larger blocks of habitat.
- The stewardship or management practices of the receiving agency to perpetuate the ecological values of the parcel. For example, whether the agency have the ability to manage, monitor, and protect these values once the parcel is transferred, and how the parcel would fit within the agency’s long-term management plans.

The table below shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 3	
0 points	No ecological values described.
1-2 points	The parcel has only minor ecological values and the receiving agency has some capacity to maintain or enhance those values.
3-4 points	The parcel has moderate ecological values and the receiving agency has capacity to maintain or enhance those values.
5 points	The parcel has significant ecological values and the receiving agency has capacity to maintain or enhance those values.

Criterion Three: Economic Values

For this criteria, applicants describe the potential positive or negative economic impact of the proposed transfer on local economic industries and the extent of those impacts. Examples of economic industries include but are not limited to the following:

- Local recreation
- Local tourism
- Forest products
- Non-forest products
- Local public services

- Shellfish
- Agriculture

This criterion does not address the impacts to local industries of ceasing DNR’s trust management activities on the parcel, now or in the future. Examples of these activities include timber harvest or leases for agriculture, grazing, or other uses. If a parcel is being nominated for this program, chances are that few, if any, of these activities are occurring on the parcel now, and the potential for these activities occurring in the future is low. DNR assesses this potential in detail when it conducts the “best interests of the trusts” analysis.

Instead, this criterion addresses the potential economic implications (positive or negative) of the parcel becoming a park, open space, nature preserve, or similar designation. For example, will the transfer:

- Attract more visitors to the area, who will purchase gas, lodging, food, and other items from local businesses?
- Provide additional protection of water resources, which in turn will protect a local fish or shellfish industry?
- Affect agriculture, timber harvest, grazing, or other revenue-generating activities currently occurring on adjacent or nearby private properties?
- Affect future development plans in the local area?
- Affect the delivery of public services? For example, would the transfer affect existing or future water pipelines, communications towers, electrical transmission lines, or other infrastructure?

Applicants will be asked to address the following in their applications:

- The positive economic values of the transfer.
- The negative economic values of the transfer, and any potential strategies for mitigating those impacts.

The table below shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: None	
0 points	No economic impacts, no information on economic impacts provided, or negative economic impacts without potential mitigation strategies.
1-2 points	Minor positive economic impacts or negative economic impacts with viable mitigation strategies, or competing positive and negative impacts of two or more industries or the local economy.
3-4 points	Moderate positive economic impacts to one or more economic industries or the local economy.
5 points	Exceptional positive economic impacts to one or more economic industries or the local economy.

Criterion Four: Public Benefits

A public benefit is something that has a positive effect on the general public or one or more groups of people. The benefits can either exist now, and continue after the transfer occurs, or exist in the future as a result of the transfer. Examples of high public benefits include but are not limited to the following:

- Park, open space, nature preserve, or similar designation
- Opportunities for resource-based recreation that are scarce or unavailable in the local area, including for an overburdened community, underserved population, or vulnerable population.
- ADA-accessible recreation opportunities
- Distinctive scenic or aesthetic features
- Documented archeological, non-tribal cultural, or historically significant sites (Indicate if these features are present but do not describe them or indicate where they are located on the parcel)
- Scientific research opportunities
- Outdoor education opportunities

Applicants describe the following in their application:

- The current public benefits provided by the parcel, including any existing recreational use.
- The public benefits that would result from the transfer. For example, transferring the parcel could expand existing public recreational access to the parcel, or provide new public access.
- The communities that would be served by the parcel, including any overburdened community, underserved population, or vulnerable population that might receive direct public benefits from this transfer.
- How the proximity of the proposed transfer to these communities may increase the benefits described.
- Any publicly reviewed or adopted plans that support the need for the public benefits identified.

The table below shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 3	
0 points	No public benefits provided.
1-2 points	The parcel has minimal public benefits now, and/or the transfer would provide a minor increase in public benefits.
3-4 points	The parcel has moderate public benefits now, and/or the transfer would provide a moderate increase in public benefits.
5 points	The parcel has exceptional public benefits now, and/or the transfer would provide an exceptional increase in public benefits.

Criterion Five: Tribal Support

This criterion gauges the level of tribal support or opposition to the proposed transfer. DNR and the receiving agency will conduct outreach to affected tribes as part of the eligibility determination. After this outreach is complete, DNR will summarize the following:

- The efforts made to contact the tribes regarding the proposed transfer, including which tribes were contacted.
- Whether the tribes supported or opposed the proposed transfer and why. Examples of support could include endorsements, letters of support, or involvement in the development of the proposal.

The following table shows how this criterion will be scored.

Point Range: 0-5; Multiplier: 3	
0 points	One or more contacted tribes opposed this proposal.
1-4 points	Tribes were non-responsive and/or responded with a mix of neutral and supportive comments towards this proposal. NOTE: The advisory committee will award 3 points if contact was made and no tribes responded.
5 points	Tribes that responded were strongly supportive of this proposal.

ⁱ **Restrictions:** Some deed restrictions will be placed upon the parcel when it is transferred. Restrictions may include mineral reservations ([RCW 79.11.210](#)), ability to purchase road access ([RCW 79.36.370](#)), specific easement reservations to protect remaining state trust lands, and/or restrictions on future, permitted uses of the property for the grantee (receiving agency) and their successors (in the event the parcel is conveyed to a new owner, or the receiving agency changes their name). Use restrictions will be based on the specific legislation that authorizes and funds the transfer. DNR also may consider a DNR proprietary use and management restriction on the parcel associated with DNR's [State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan](#) (HCP). DNR will consult with the intended TLT recipient on any proposed, proprietary HCP encumbrance language prior to the transfer.

ⁱⁱ **Overburdened community:** A geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in [RCW 19.405.020](#) (ESSSB 5141 Sec. 2 (11)). "Highly impacted community" means a community designated by the department of health based on cumulative impact analyses in [RCW 19.405.140](#) or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Underserved populations:** Populations who face barriers in accessing victim services, and includes populations underserved because of geographic location or religion, underserved racial or ethnic populations, populations underserved because of special needs (such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age) and any other

population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or the Secretary of Health and Human Services, as appropriate (34 USC § 12291(a)(39)).

^{iv} **Vulnerable populations:** Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms ([ESSSB 5141 Sec. 2 \(14\)](#)). "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to: (i) Racial or ethnic minorities; 11 (ii) Low-income populations; 12 13 (iii) Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and 14 15 (iv) Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

^v **Old growth** is defined in the [Policy for Sustainable Forests](#) as forest stands of at least five acres in the most structurally complex stage of stand development, sometimes referred to as the fully functional stage of stand development, with a natural origin date prior to 1850, generally considered the start of European settlement in the Pacific Northwest. Examples of structural complexity include multiple canopy layers, snags, gaps in the forest canopy, and fallen trees on the forest floor.

Natural Areas Factsheet



Washington State's Natural Areas Program

'FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS'

What is the Natural Areas Program and why is it important?

The Natural Areas Program within the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for managing a statewide system of conservation lands. The program protects some of the best remaining examples of natural Washington, including native ecosystems, plants and animals—the “blueprints” of Washington’s natural history. In addition to contributing to region-wide biodiversity conservation, natural areas serve as baseline reference sites to guide the management and restoration of less pristine lands. The mission of the Natural Areas Program is: “Conserving Washington’s native species and ecosystems, today and for future generations.”

What is the difference between Natural Area Preserves (NAPs) and Natural Resources Conservation Areas (NRCAs)?

Both designations protect native plants, plant communities and animals, and both are used as outdoor classrooms for environmental education and scientific research. NAPs protect the highest quality native ecosystems and generally host more sensitive or rare species. NRCAs often include significant geologic features, archaeological resources or scenic attributes. NRCAs often have developed public access facilities, while some of the more sensitive NAPs have limited, or guided, access to protect resources.

Can't we just purchase these lands and let nature take care of them?

All natural areas require some form of active management due to the disruption of natural processes and disturbance regimes, such as wildfire, and due to the recent introduction of invasive weeds or other species. Lack of hands-on management would mean the loss of native biodiversity.

Weed control for dozens of invaders including Himalayan blackberry, English ivy and scotch broom is necessary because these non-native species thrive in the absence of natural competitors from their home lands. Invasive species often outcompete and smother native plants, resulting in the loss of plant communities and animal habitat. Only a fraction of all non-native species in Washington are invasive. However, those that are can have profound impacts to native ecosystems, as well as severe economic consequences. English ivy, for example, can invade large areas of forestland smothering wildflowers and other understory plants, preventing the regeneration of native trees and shrubs and damaging mature trees. Invasive species are second only to habitat loss as the greatest threat to biological diversity.

Also, decades of fire suppression have allowed some native species to displace other native plant species or communities. For example, without recurring natural fire disturbance, oak savannas become overtopped by fire-sensitive Douglas fir trees that shade out the shorter, fire-tolerant Garry oaks and native grasses and wildflowers, leading to the eventual demise of the prairie ecosystem and the species that thrive there. At several prairie NAPs, the state Natural Areas Program is reintroducing fire in the form of controlled burns.

Finally, before they became natural areas some lands were modified, damaged or degraded and require restoration. For example, forests that were cleared for pasture land are being replanted to shade streams and provide native habitat for fish and wildlife. Abandoned forest roads are being re-vegetated to prevent sediments from running into streams and to restore the original hydrology throughout the landscape.

(more)

NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM: Conservation, Recreation & Transactions Division

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*Conserving
Washington's
native species
and ecosystems,
today and
for future
generations*

Considering the many threats to native species and ecosystems, without active management the network of natural areas would look and function very differently than it has for millennia, resulting in a loss of Washington State’s natural heritage—the loss of our biological legacy.

Why is it important to protect biodiversity?

Each species is an important part of an ecosystem. Plants and animals are intimately tied to one another in ways that we are just beginning to understand. For example, many plant species rely only on one or a few insects to pollinate their flowers. If we lose these pollinators we lose the plants that depend on them, and then we lose the larger animals that depend on the plants for habitat—the process of loss continues throughout the “web of life.”

To use an airplane as a metaphor for an ecosystem, we can remove a few nuts and bolts and the plane will continue to fly, but if too many parts are removed eventually the plane will fall from the sky.

Can the public visit natural areas?

What activities are allowed on natural areas?

Yes, all natural areas offer some form of public access. Each is evaluated for the types of access that will not harm sensitive features. Some natural area preserves are highly sensitive and access is limited to guided tours, educational use and scientific research. Others, such as Mima Mounds NAP and the Chehalis River Surge Plain NAP, have interpretive trails where the public can enjoy and learn about these important ecosystems. Natural resources conservation areas also are open to low-impact activities such as hiking, bird watching or wildflower viewing, and camping is allowed at several NRCAs.

How are natural areas acquired?

Can DNR condemn private property or force a landowner to sell their land?

DNR does not condemn land. Natural areas are acquired through gifts, land exchanges or purchase from willing sellers at market value. Usually acquisition funds come from state and federal grants. Some natural areas are former state-owned trust lands, and when they are transferred into natural area status, the trust is compensated at market value. Following this, the trust purchases replacement assets that will be managed to earn revenue for public schools or other trust beneficiaries.

What is a natural area boundary and what implications will it have on my property?

A proposed natural area boundary is a designation of lands eligible for inclusion within a state-owned natural area. Lands located within the boundary only become part of the natural area if they are acquired by DNR. The boundary is simply an administrative tool to indicate where DNR will work with willing property owners to create the natural area. A proposed natural area boundary imposes no change in land use zoning, development code requirements, or any other restrictions on landowners. Land is purchased only from willing sellers at market value, which is determined by an independent, third-party appraisal.

How many natural areas are managed by the Natural Areas Program?

DNR’s Natural Areas Program is the single largest conservator of native ecosystems, plant communities and habitat for rare species in Washington. Currently, the program protects more than 167,000 acres in 97 natural areas throughout the state.

How can I help protect natural areas?

Volunteers play an important role as site stewards and environmental education interpreters. They also may take part in work parties to help control or map invasive weeds or restore habitat. Visitors to natural areas can help by staying on approved trails, not littering and not picking flowers or removing any other natural resource. Neighbors of natural areas can voluntarily help by not planting invasive plants, keeping cats indoors and dogs out of the natural area, and notifying DNR staff about inappropriate activities on the site, such as garbage dumping or theft. If you are interested in volunteering with the Natural Areas Program, please contact the region office nearest you. Go to www.dnr.wa.gov or call (360) 902-1000 for office location information.