

2020 Small Forest Landowner Demographic Report



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Legislative Requirement



RCW 76.13.110 requires the DNR Small Forest Landowner Office (SFLO) to provide a report every four years to the Forest Practices Board and the Legislature.



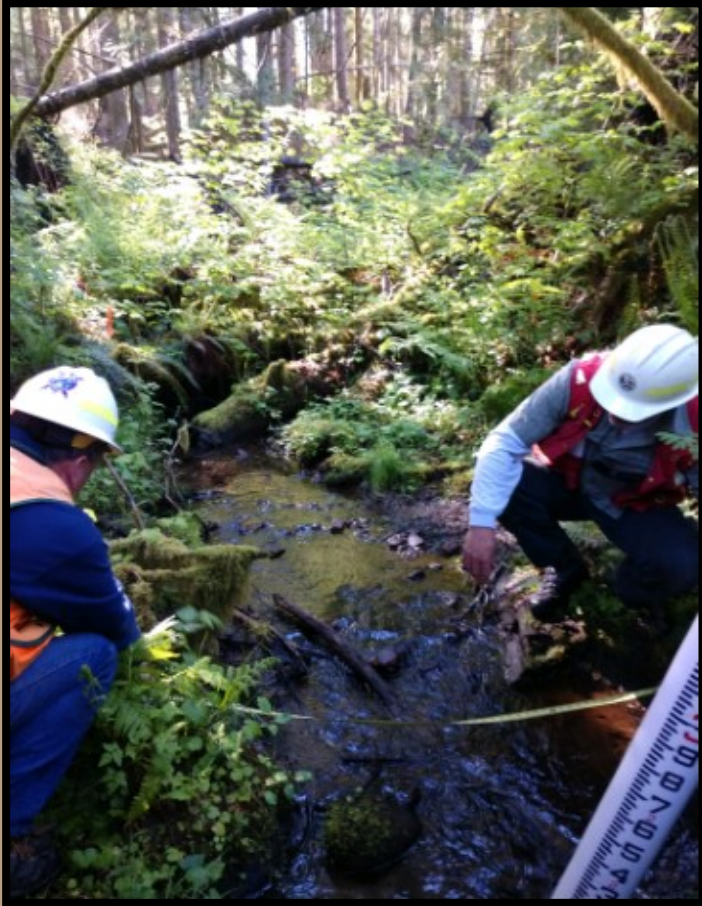
Legislative Requirements



- Estimates of small forest landowner acreage divided into specific acreage size class groupings and number of small forest landowners in each of the acreage size class groupings.
- Number of Forest Practices Applications from small forest landowners
- Identify WAU's with the majority of ownership being small forest landowners



Demographic Trends



Total area of forest in Washington State was estimated to have declined by about 394,000 acres (2 percent) between 2007 and 2019.

Small forest landowners account for 15% of forest acres.

SFL forest acres declined from 2.99 million acres in 2007 to 2.88 million acres in 2019 (a 3.7% decline).

Small forest landowners increased 8.5% to 218,000



Small Forest Landowner Demographics

Small forest landowners ownership of 2.88 million in Washington, it is about evenly split between the western and eastern portions of the state:

1.46 million acres in western Washington, and
1.42 million acres in eastern Washington

Western WA has three times as many small forest landowners as Eastern Washington.



Small Forest Landowner Demographics



The University of Washington conducted a survey of small forest landowners to rank their perception of different aspects or values of forestland ownership. The four highest ranked aspects of forest ownership were:

- 1) Nature and aesthetics,
- 2) Recreation; non-timber forest products, and hunting,
- 3) Family and privacy, and
- 4) Income, investment, and heirs.



Small Forest Landowner Demographics

- Top concerns of SFLs are **property taxes, wildfire, and nearby development.**
- SFLs who are challenged by future ownership concerns (lack of a willing heir) are more likely to convert their forestry land.
- SFLs think about timber income and having good environmental conditions on their lands instead of timber income or having good environmental conditions on their forests.
- Forest lands with riparian buffers were not sold more frequently than other small forest landowner lands.



Recommendations

Policies that support, fund, and incentivize forest retention and prevent the loss of private forestlands.

- Expand the Designated Forestland taxation rules to ensure eligibility of forestlands are valued and managed for a range of ownership objectives and not just harvest.
- Take a stronger leadership role in supporting the existing Transfer of Development Rights.
- Recognize the value of these working forest lands for ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration and climate resiliency and make strategic big scale investments as a priority of any environmental and climate solution.



Recommendations

Additional resources and funding for regulatory assistance and stewardship programs, and SFLO programs.

- Provide additional funding for the stewardship and regulatory assistance to ensure greater outreach and education to small forest landowners who want to learn about the care, management, or protection of their lands.
- Provide additional funding for the Family Forest Fish Passage Program;
- Provide additional funding for the Forestry Riparian Easement Program.



Recommendations

Availability of current information about the small forest landowner population

Recommend the Legislature provide funding to the University of Washington every four years to update the small forest landowner forestland database, conduct relevant surveys and collect other data as needed.



Recommendations Emergded as Results

- Development of a Small Forest Landowner work group responsible for research and making recommendations for inclusion into the carbon sequestration market
- \$2 million for regulatory technical assistance
- \$5.7 million for FREP
- \$5.9 million for FFFPP
- HB 1168 increasing landowner education assistance: Forest Stewardship and Small Landowner Forest Health Program



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