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Minutes

Board of Natural Resources Meeting

May 2, 2023

Webinar/In-Person, Olympia, Washington

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

The Honorable Hilary Franz, Chair & Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands

Dr. Dan Brown, Vice Chair & Director, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, University of Washington

The Honorable Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

The Honorable Lisa Janicki, Commissioner, Skagit County

Jim Cahill, Designee for the Honorable Jay Inslee, Washington State Governor

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dr. Wendy Powers, Dean, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences, Washington State University

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Hillary Franz called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Boardmembers provided self-introduction. A meeting quorum was confirmed.

**WEBINAR/SAFETY BRIEFING**

Ms. Tami Kellogg, Board Coordinator, outlined how to view and participate in the combined webinar and in-person meeting.

Chair Franz addressed disruptions at the April meeting and reaffirmed the Board's expectations for respectful conduct during all meetings. The Board is aware decisions can often invoke strong emotions from the communities and stakeholders invested in those decisions. It is critical to ensure decisions rendered by the Board are equitably balanced in benefits. DNR is committed to ensuring the long-term health of state forests for all benefits forests provide. Each timber sale has undergone extensive scientific analysis and public comment and review consistent with the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) and the objectives of state trust lands, the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), and established Board policies and procedures. She asked the public to respect others in attendance with differences in ideas and opinions. Disruptions interfering with the Board's ability to conduct business will result in temporarily adjourning and reconvening in another location where members of the public may only observe virtually as outlined in RCW 42.30.050 Open Public Meetings

1 Act.

2  
3 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – April 4, 2023**

4 Chair Franz requested consideration of a motion to approve the minutes of April 4, 2023.

5  
6 MOTION: Dr. Brown moved to approve the minutes as published.

7  
8 SECOND: Superintendent Reykdal seconded the motion.

9  
10 ACTION: The motion carried unanimously.

11  
12 **LIGHTNING TALK - Information**

13 **Westside Regeneration**

14 **Florian Deisenhofer, Silviculture Scientist, State Lands**

15 Mr. Deisenhofer presented information on DNR's reforestation program. The Cascade Range  
16 along Western Washington and Oregon has an ecological history of severe fires occurring  
17 every 100 to 500 years. One example is the 1902 Yacolt Burn in southwest Washington  
18 destroying approximately 239,000 acres of mostly virgin forest. The Yacolt fire was the  
19 largest wildfire in Western Washington until 2015. Natural regeneration took many decades.  
20 Another ecological impact on westside forests are wind events. The 2007 "Great Coastal  
21 Gale" occurred along the coast of southwest Washington. Wind events occur more frequently  
22 and create rapid reforestation on a smaller scale.

23  
24 During the early 1900s, forests were dominated by extensive timber extraction and post fire  
25 salvaged logging. The first state nursery was established in 1936. The Forest Practices Act  
26 (FPA) was adopted in 1974. Early artificial regeneration focused on planting and reseeding  
27 Douglas fir. Natural forest regeneration was slow and took decades with fewer but bigger  
28 trees and large areas of early seral habitat for extended periods because of slow regeneration.  
29 Large fires resulted in salvage logging and extensive timber extraction which created  
30 landscapes dominated by Douglas fir as the most fire resistant tree with less structural tree  
31 diversity. Different periods have created different kinds of forests.

32  
33 Mr. Deisenhofer displayed a series of photos depicting the Yacolt State Forest prior to the  
34 1902 burn, during the 1930s to 1960s, 1974, and in 1997. He reviewed several policies and  
35 procedures on reforestation efforts. Regeneration is site-specific based on the ecology of the  
36 site (vegetation zone & plant association, soils, topography, elevation, climate, etc.). In 2022,  
37 westside planted species diversity included 78% Douglas fir, 11% Western hemlock, 5%  
38 Western redcedar, with smaller percentages of other tree species, such as Sitka Spruce, Red  
39 Alder, Noble fir, and Grand fir.

40  
41 The 2019-2023 Westside Young Stand Surveys of 15,196 acres surveyed with electronic data  
42 recorders encompassing 242 westside stands of young stands 5-8 years old documented that  
43 only 12% of the sites have one or two species and 88% of the sites contain three or more  
44 species. Approximately 35% of surveyed stands contain five or more species. The surveys  
45 reflect that more species and more trees were documented than intended in certain areas. At  
46 some point usually between age 10 and 15, DNR conducts commercial thinning removing

1 excess trees if needed. However, DNR does not remove naturally regenerated trees  
2 completely with the strategy of leaving the best trees.  
3

4 Superintendent Reykdal inquired as to the definition of "best trees." Mr. Deisenhofer  
5 explained that the trees are typically larger and healthy, as well as having more economic  
6 value, such as cedar, which is a species that would be retained regardless of its size.  
7

8 Mr. Deisenhofer reported DNR's seed management is designed to maintain genetic adaptation  
9 and diversity. The concept of adaptation is the "right plant in the right place" by deploying  
10 the appropriate species in the appropriate seed zone. Within Western Washington, 155  
11 combinations of species exist by seed zone and elevation band combinations. A second  
12 aspect of genetic diversity is the material by ensuring an adequate number of parent trees in  
13 each seed lot. DNR's two strategies include wood-run collections (cones collected in the  
14 forest). Within DNR's seed orchards, it is important to have many parents to capture the  
15 broad genetic diversity of the forest. Since the implementation of the HCP, forests are  
16 managed differently with much learned but with many outstanding questions remaining. Staff  
17 continues to work with different research cooperatives in the Pacific Northwest to improve  
18 reforestation and silviculture programs for DNR.  
19

20 Dr. Brown said he supports DNR's efforts to expand landscape diversity as well as species  
21 diversity in the forest after harvesting. He asked about the types of changes in the nursery  
22 program, such as a shift in the mix of species cultivated in the nursery to support the goal of  
23 greater diversity. Mr. Deisenhofer explained that Douglas fir is typically grown as a bare root  
24 tree. Webster Nursery operations support the growing of bare root seedlings as well as  
25 shifting more reforestation efforts to other species beyond Douglas fir. More success has  
26 been achieved from container seedlings, which speaks for the need for increased greenhouse  
27 space. At this time, DNR continues to contract a number of seedlings to other nurseries as  
28 greenhouse capacity is insufficient.  
29

30 Mr. Cahill noted that the state budget included additional funds to expand the nursery and  
31 increase capacity. He asked about the extent of disease mitigation by DNR. Mr. Deisenhofer  
32 said disease mitigation is difficult as diseases are not always apparent. In those situations  
33 where disease is obvious, the areas are marked with different species planted in those  
34 locations. Disease mitigation involves shifting species within a land unit or landscape to  
35 increase tolerance or immunity to diseases.  
36

37 Commissioner Janicki commented on the stress experienced by cedar trees with some private  
38 landowners planting an understory of cedars to protect larger cedars from warmer climates.  
39 She also views cedar trees as a culture resource as much as a marketable commodity. She  
40 asked whether there are strategies to protect and nurture cedars. Mr. Deisenhofer said DNR  
41 has pursued many options while acknowledging that the industry has not been successful in  
42 protecting cedars on all sites. DNR efforts include installing cedar protectors for several years  
43 to enable seedling to reach a specific height. Another approach is hiding cedars in areas with  
44 less accessibility. Staff is also exploring repellants and is testing a new product. Another  
45 option is installing fences in some specific areas.  
46

1           **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

2           **Julie Ratner** cited the Board’s hesitation at the last meeting to approve proposed timber sales.  
3           As one Boardmember stated, “We can’t stop a sale because people are upset for love of  
4           parcel. We all need and use wood.” The Board has the authority to sell only plantation  
5           forests and protect legacy parcels by separating them from the bundle of parcels. A precedent  
6           has been set. The proposed timber sale of Q Harvard of 515 acres of an 883-acre stand is  
7           comprised of 63% Douglas fir with no reserved acres. Natural tree life expectancy of a forest  
8           is 300 to 500 years. The value of a tree is not its board feet, it is its biology. The science and  
9           economic proof demonstrates short harvest cycles and the current rate of clear-cutting are not  
10          sustainable for the timber industry. Saving legacy forests is the top priority to alleviate  
11          extreme weather and to store maximum carbon. She opposes the auction of Delica 2 and  
12          other parcels in the sales proposal.

13  
14          **Charlotte Persons**, resident of Thurston County, reminded the Board of efforts over the last  
15          25 years to create diverse planted forests. Legacy forests have created diversity and  
16          ecosystems. The Board is empowered and not helpless puppets that must bow down to  
17          current law and systems. The Board has the power to pause the cutting of legacy forests.  
18          During that pause, the Board should work with Commissioner Franz, staff, and the State  
19          Legislature to create new laws.

20  
21          **Peter Goldman, Washington Forest Law Center**, said politicians and agency heads often  
22          promise open transparent law and science-driven government decision-making. The secret of  
23          the selective way DNR makes decisions and advises the Board makes a mockery of the  
24          principle. Rather than assemble and hear from expert panels with objective scientific and  
25          legal perspectives on the Board’s mandates and decisions relative to old forests, DNR directs  
26          the Board in a results-oriented rubber stamp manner that prohibits and frustrates meaningful  
27          public comment. Today, for example, the chair’s report includes an extensive presentation on  
28          the biological and carbon value of protecting forests that are nearly 100 years old. Yet,  
29          impartial scientists have no role in the decision and the public is forced into making two-  
30          minute presentations. It does not matter whether they are labeled old carbon-rich, structurally  
31          complex forests, or nicknamed legacy forests. DNR is advising the Board and it is making a  
32          rational, legal, and science-based decision not to identify and protect old forests. On the  
33          contrary, DNR has a legal mandate to identify and protect those forests. DNR committed in  
34          its HCP and its Policy for Sustainable Forests to grow at least 10% to 15% of old structurally  
35          complex forests in each planning area by 2070. DNR’s numbers project achieving only 1% of  
36          that goal in 2023. DNR has no planning process in place to achieve the targets.

37  
38          **Sherri Dysart, resident of Mason County**, asked for action to cancel or postpone the Sure  
39          Wood timber sale and vote against the Plumb Bob timber sale and all timber sales with  
40          mature structurally complex older forests. She recently read a book titled, *Extraordinary*  
41          *Women Conservationists of Washington: Mothers of Nature* about extraordinary women  
42          conservationists of Washington. Among them were Jennifer Belcher and Christine Gregoire.  
43          The book includes powerful stories and because of those special *Mothers of Nature*, the state  
44          is ever more beautiful. Today, another critical juncture is here. All independent scientists  
45          attest to the reality of climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Those same scientists like  
46          Beverly Law point to the need to protect and conserve mature and old growth forests to

1 forestall climate catastrophe. She asked whether Commissioner Franz would step up at this  
2 time in history where everything is at stake and take bold action to protect the last remaining  
3 structurally complex older forests on public lands and be remembered as one of the  
4 *Extraordinary Women Conservationists of Washington*.

5  
6 **Jim Oliver** cited earlier testimony that has frequently espoused shared values of sustainability  
7 and biodiversity. Actions speak louder than words and the discordance between DNR words  
8 and actions on forest management is made clear each month by considering one document;  
9 the proposed list of timber sales.

10  
11 He would ask the Board to direct DNR to conduct a mature forest inventory similar to the  
12 recently released USDA Mature and Old Growth Forest Inventory. The inventory should use  
13 both GIS modeling and field data collection to obtain an accurate sense of where mature  
14 legacy forests exist and how much remains. In the meantime, DNR should pause logging all  
15 pre-1945 forests because at a bare minimum, the bear would not approve the Nugget timber  
16 sale, as Unit 2 is his home.

17  
18 **Robert Mitchell** spoke to a number of issues ranging from a mad weird world created by  
19 public policies to the dismay of logging industry representatives who unwittingly seem to  
20 serve the goals of the global elite by supplying lumber to build the houses for the elite to the  
21 detriment of others. He questioned the lack of the American tradition of pursuing liberty and  
22 happiness by escaping to the great outdoors and recommended DNR should welcome public  
23 volunteers who are willing to pick up trash on public lands to ensure public access. DNR  
24 should supply dumpsters, grabbers, and bags so volunteers can keep roads clean to keep  
25 access open. He blamed the lack of access to the great outdoors for many of society's  
26 problems involving drugs and crime that stress county budgets and increase DNR revenue  
27 demands. DNR needs more diversity on its boards and commissions. Current conservation  
28 caucus representatives are muted and may have conflicts of interest. DNR needs win-win  
29 policy solutions from someone who is outside the system. The Board should not approve any  
30 timber auctions and should ask for information on the margins of error in the Chair Report  
31 and lack of confirming the findings. He questioned why DNR did not consider mycorrhizal  
32 fungi networks.

33  
34 **Donna Albert, resident of Montesano**, said keeping global warming below 2 °C requires a  
35 dramatic 50% cut in carbon emissions in seven years and in developed countries requirements  
36 are near zero emissions in the next 10 years. Today is not the time to release large amounts of  
37 carbon by cutting mature trees. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (PCC) models  
38 also assume the removal and storage of massive amounts of carbon in coming decades using  
39 unproven technology that carries risks not fully appreciated. It is uncertain if it is possible to  
40 safely remove carbon at the scale assumed in the models. Mature forests are the most stable  
41 and reliable means of sequestering carbon. Mature forests will be priceless in future years for  
42 pulling carbon from the atmosphere. The planet is facing a biodiversity crisis with up to one-  
43 third of plant and insect species lost. Mature timber sales dismantle living systems that  
44 cannot be replaced. Cutting mature forests results in loss of valuable habitat. At least  
45 exercise caution and stop cutting the few remaining legacy forests. It is important to  
46 understand the great scale of the physical climate harm all children will face. She urged

1 putting accounting and political challenges into perspective and save every bit of mature  
2 forests remaining.  
3

4 **Joshua Wright** commented on the Sure Wood and Plumb Bob timber sales. He visited the  
5 site of the Plumb Bob timber sale while completing a ground check. He discovered an  
6 imperiled plant community within the area and contacted Dylan Fischer, PhD in Forest  
7 Ecology with The Evergreen State College who joined him at the site and agreed the site was  
8 home to a rare plant community of Pacific rhododendrons, Douglas fir, Western hemlock,  
9 Evergreen huckleberry, and Salal that are listed as imperiled. Under the sustainable forestry  
10 initiative, DNR is obligated to protect those rare plant associations. He contacted staff who  
11 removed the timber sale from the April meeting. DNR sent a biologist to assess the area. The  
12 biologist completed a report, which he received yesterday via email giving him no time to  
13 respond. The report indicated that all four units of the Plumb Bob timber sale contain this  
14 plant association and because of the fragmented nature of the association it does not merit  
15 protection. The report indicates the survey was not comprehensive and was based on roadside  
16 observations. He and Mr. Fischer visited the site and observed the association systems within  
17 the forest. Today, based on roadside observations in a non-comprehensive report, DNR staff  
18 indicates the observations are sufficient to move forward on the Plumb Bob timber sale. The  
19 Board should not approve the Plumb Bob timber sale.  
20

21 **Julianne Gale** reported she is attending the meeting on behalf of the Port of Allyn  
22 Commissioners, who passed a resolution opposing the Sure Wood timber sale to protect  
23 economic development. She cited a passage within the resolution that speaks to promoting  
24 and supporting economic development and how the Sherwood State Forest provides important  
25 economic benefits to the Port of Allyn. The timber sale or any clear-cut logging of Sherwood  
26 Forest would negatively affect economic development in the Port of Allyn. The Board is  
27 authorized to approve, cancel, or postpone all state trust timber sales. The Board of  
28 Commissioners for the Port of Allyn formally request the cancellation of the Sure Wood  
29 timber sale. The Port of Allyn formally requested the Mason County Commissioners send a  
30 letter of support for protecting Sherwood State Forest through the mechanism described in  
31 Engrossed Senate Bill 5200.  
32

33 **James Davis**, resident of Summit Lake, thanked Thurston County Commissioners who  
34 listened and embraced the Summit Lake community and its serious fact-based concerns. The  
35 Delica 15-acre area shares characteristics of a landslide caused by DNR actions in Capitol  
36 Forest to the Ranch House Barbeque. DNR paid approximately \$900,000 for that landslide.  
37 Directly below Delica, a massive blowout and flooding event occurred following DNR's  
38 installation of a road above the area. The near catastrophe event was fully documented by  
39 FEMA. The community has attended meetings over the last two years hoping DNR  
40 leadership would listen and accept the community's serious concerns. However, residents  
41 have been ignored similar to other concerns expressed by individuals who continually attend  
42 and dedicate their lives in hopes of leaving the earth in better hands. He asked whether the  
43 sale of \$300,000 is worth the risk the cut poses to the community and its sole source of  
44 drinking water. Profits from the timber sale are not dedicated to schools or the county, but  
45 rather would fund the Capital Fund at the risk of the community. He thanked Thurston  
46 County leadership and all citizens who have relentlessly attended meetings to ensure that the

1 constantly changing environment has a seat at the table.  
2

3 **Kimberly Sowa** said she is representing residents of Summit Lake in Thurston County. The  
4 fate of the Delica timber sale will be determined later in the month by the Pollution Control  
5 Hearings Board because the Thurston County Board of Commissioners presented the request.  
6 The residents of Summit Lake rely on the lake for drinking water. Residents have been  
7 striving to get DNR to listen to the community for two years as to why the 15 acres should not  
8 be cut. Evidence has been presented demonstrating the ecologically sensitive, wet, and steep  
9 area that triggered a massive flood to the properties below caused by DNR's installation of a  
10 logging road. In spite of all the proof, DNR officials continue to deny claims and concerns.  
11 Thankfully, Thurston County Commissioners did not and wrote to Commissioner Franz about  
12 why the land should not be logged. The Delica timber sale sits 700 feet from a lake used by  
13 the community for drinking water. The land is steep and wet and has many streams and  
14 creeks with some spawning kokanee salmon. DNR indicated that it plans to spot treat the  
15 clear-cut with chemicals, which will travel to the lake and pollute the community's drinking  
16 water. The Summit Lake community is paying close attention as well as the media and many  
17 other groups across the state and in Oregon to monitor the outcome of timber sales and  
18 whether DNR will pursue the right course of action. The Board has the ability to ensure DNR  
19 makes the right decision.  
20

21 **Tom Anderson** said he and his wife have been residents and property owners at Summit Lake  
22 for 47 years. They own a cabin located below the hill and within the watershed of the  
23 proposed Delica timber harvest. A seasonal stream that runs through their property originates  
24 within the 15 acres. They have a personal history of the consequences of logging in the  
25 Summit Lake watershed including flooding, erosion, habitat change, and sediment that could  
26 potentially impact the community's primary domestic water supply. The community is  
27 unique in an ecologically sensitive area of 600 residents who represent more than a line item  
28 on a financial spreadsheet. The community cares about where it lives, its beauty, its  
29 sustainability, and the affects of development and logging. The financial inconvenience for  
30 DNR of not harvesting 15 acres of Delica pales in comparison to the potential short-term and  
31 long-term effects from the cut to the residents, water quality, property values, and safety.  
32 Historically, the forest and the lake basin have been viewed as a commercial timber asset and  
33 have been harvested many times by many private and public entities. Perhaps it is time to  
34 reserve those parcels of older diverse forests for the value of what those trees contribute to the  
35 ecology of the watershed. He asked for a complete moratorium of clear-cutting around  
36 Summit Lake.  
37

38 **Ed Bowen, Clallam County**, remarked that the Quimper transfer changes it from a lease to a  
39 permanent conservation status. He asked whether the prior Board approving the lease had any  
40 inclination that a permanent conservation would be placed on the property rather than a 50-  
41 year action. By approving the proposal, the action removes generational equity of long-term  
42 operable acres. He expressed concerns about the Sustainable Harvest Calculation (SHC)  
43 surrounding operable east and west acres, how the SHC addresses arrearage, and whether the  
44 concept of unified trust will be introduced. No information is included on the SHC on DNR's  
45 website. Another concern surrounding proposed timber sales is the fourth quarter 2023  
46 forecast to meet the SHC.

1  
2 **Paul Butler, Thurston County**, said he is a retired geoscientist and small forest landowner in  
3 northwest Thurston County. The state has experienced its third La Nina winter and while the  
4 Cascade snowpack was near normal this winter except for the Mount Baker area, the state has  
5 experienced two very dry summers in 2021 and 2022. January through March was dry based  
6 on precipitation measurements he collected on his property near the northeast area of Capitol  
7 Forest since 1995. Although April was wetter than average, the state is headed into the driest  
8 part of the year with only 75% of normal precipitation in 2023. According to the Washington  
9 State Climatologist, sea surface temperatures in the Pacific indicate the area is entering an El  
10 Niño phase by the end of the year creating warmer temperatures and below normal  
11 precipitation in the Pacific Northwest. Climate change continues to rear its ugly head and  
12 actions are too slow to combat the affects. Protecting carbon dense structurally complex older  
13 forests in Western Washington is necessary. Industrial forest groups claim lumber sequesters  
14 carbon but forest ecologists indicate there is no credible peer reviewed scientific research to  
15 support the contention that cutting down older forests is an effective means of addressing  
16 climate change. Standing carbon dense older forests are a much better choice than 2x4s. The  
17 Washington State Supreme Court ruling and actions by the Legislature this session have given  
18 the Board and DNR a framework for permanently protecting older forests while still meeting  
19 trust obligations.

20  
21 **Peggy Morell, resident of Mason County**, called on the leadership of the Board to look  
22 beyond revenue generation with a decision to manage the remaining older growth forests for  
23 the environmental benefits they provide to people the trust lands serve. Saving the mature  
24 trees of Sherwood State Forest alone will not stop the impacts of a changing climate but  
25 structurally complex carbon dense forests are one of the most cost-effective reliable buffers to  
26 flooding, landslides, and drought that are increasingly part of living in Mason County. She  
27 cited those who are not in the decision-making space but are disproportionately affected by  
28 climate conditions expect it to get worse. She holds space today for those without stable  
29 housing who most directly experience the health and safety threats of extreme prolonged heat  
30 and flooding, for older adults with limited incomes and mobility issues who have trouble  
31 finding a safe place during severe weather, for those living with underlying health conditions  
32 with limited access to measures that reduce their exposure, and for the children and  
33 grandchildren whose quality of life will be shaped by the decisions made today. She asked  
34 the Board to make the choice as leaders firmly grounded in the realities of a rapidly changing  
35 world by offering a motion to cancel the Sure Wood timber sale.

36  
37 **Daniel Harm** reflected on the ancient and universal understanding of good ethics to give  
38 credit for the hard work and efforts of others who were intimately involved in the legislative  
39 session contributing countless hours of their time for giving much momentum for protecting  
40 older native forests. Today, forest management is becoming a major discussion. DNR's  
41 percentages and definitions are misleading as currently implemented and do not replicate  
42 natural disturbances. Solar carbon should be discussed as it can account for half of the carbon  
43 released from logging and has never been accounted for on any balance sheet. Common  
44 citizens and poorly funded non-profits are integrating the most recent carbon and forestry  
45 science and it is reasonable to expect major establishments to do so as well. It is important to  
46 debunk bad science regurgitated to support insufficient management. He is often shocked and



1 stunned as to how many primeval forests were destroyed in less than 200 years. It is  
2 staggering despite having the knowledge and ingenuity to regrow primeval forests over a few  
3 hundred years. Given everything about the cycles of history, planting in the future is possible  
4 to repopulate the land with primeval forests that were destroyed in way that would support a  
5 thriving timber industry.  
6

7 **John Brinton** said he is a 28-year resident of the Summit Lake community and has witnessed  
8 the effects of logging around the lake over the years and its effects on the ecosystem and the  
9 changes in the environment. He described the series of changes to the environment and how  
10 it has affected both wildlife and residents. Logging operations are ruining the environment  
11 where residents live. The community depends on the watershed and the environment. The  
12 community is asking for the elimination of the Delica timber sale.  
13

14 **Miguel Perez-Gibson, Washington Conservation Action**, reported the trust is perpetual and  
15 there is a duty to maintain intergenerational equity in perpetuity. It is a difficult concept to  
16 conceive admittedly. Given the climate crisis, seven generations should be the minimum basis  
17 for management. There is also a duty to reduce risks to the trusts. As publicly elected  
18 officials and as representatives of higher learning institutions, a key to reducing risks is  
19 securing the public's trust in management of state forests. Without it, the Board runs the risk  
20 of losing social license. When citizens believe its government is disinterested in addressing  
21 their concerns the state constitution allows for citizen initiatives, which is often a blunt  
22 instrument. It is far better for the trustees to address the public and carefully craft solution-  
23 based policies rather than stubbornly insist on the status quo. Take the politically charged  
24 legacy forest issue of structurally complex older forests representing 1% of the state land base  
25 and search for creative solutions. The average DNR sale is 30,000 board feet per acre with  
26 older forests generating 40,000 to 80,000 board feet per acre. Using a combination of older  
27 forests, retention sales using biodiversity pathways, thinning, and other management options  
28 would result in approximately the same volume as a typical DNR timber sale. That would  
29 entail stewarding a perpetual trust, employing intergenerational equity, reducing risk, and  
30 maintaining the Board's social license.  
31

32 **Brel Froebe** yielded his time to former Commissioner Peter Goldmark.  
33

34 **Peter Goldmark** reported it has been six years since he chaired the Board and left public  
35 office. During the intervening years as a scientist, he has kept pace with the convincing flow  
36 of information on the deterioration of the climate. It is clear all efforts are necessary to cut  
37 CO2 emissions and sequester carbon whenever and however possible. One of the best lowest  
38 cost and most energy efficient methods is protecting older forests, which store large quantities  
39 of carbon while releasing oxygen. Older Douglas fir legacy forests excel in that process. It is  
40 now time to walk the talk of dealing with climate. The forests must be permanently  
41 preserved, and in fact, the Legislature agreed with the goal and recently adopted a budget  
42 proviso instructing DNR to protect 2,000 acres of older mature carbon dense structurally  
43 complex state forests. Yet, there still exists roughly 70,000 to 80,000 acres of those uniquely  
44 valuable forests that DNR has scheduled for obliteration. If left undisturbed, older Douglas  
45 fir legacy forests in Western Washington annually store the amount of carbon released by  
46 burning 21 million gallons of gas annually. This is wrong for the state, the climate, and for

1 the people. In the fight against climate change, those trees are worth far more to all who are  
2 alive. Everyone will be judged by their children and grandchildren tomorrow by the choices  
3 made today. DNR and the Board must protect older mature forests on state trust lands and  
4 cease offering those forests to be logged. Now is the time to manage public forests for the  
5 future instead of clinging to the practices of the past.

6  
7 **Mary Jean Ryan** acknowledged the tremendous results by the Legislature thanks to the work  
8 of so many. Revitalized trust land transfer program, funding for the Ecosystem Services Plan,  
9 and \$83 million for the new Natural Climate Solutions Account, the single largest investment  
10 to date that firmly establishes forests as an integral part of the state's climate protection  
11 strategy. She and others look forward to working together with DNR and the Board on  
12 effective implementation. In the Chair Report, a discussion is included on legacy forests.  
13 Legacy forests exhibit structural complexity and are carbon dense forests likely logged to  
14 some degree pre-World War II before industrial clear-cutting was common practice. Legacy  
15 forests are naturally regenerated and not monocrop plantations providing significant value as  
16 habitat for diverse species, as well as watershed and water quality benefits. Unfortunately, the  
17 presentation leaves the impression that legacy forests are defined simplistically by stand age,  
18 which is incorrect. For example, the natural climate solutions proviso does not mention stand  
19 age and calls for the conservation of structurally complex carbon dense forests. It is  
20 important to consider the qualities that make certain forests important candidates for  
21 conservation especially today during the climate and biodiversity crisis. She urged working  
22 together on a meaningful older forest policy that uses best science from forest ecology and  
23 forest carbon research. Until then, the Board should pause the logging of irreplaceable  
24 forests.

25  
26 **Brian Davis** said generations of his family have lived in the community near the Delica  
27 timber sale. Summit Lake represents the people and the surrounding community. When there  
28 are problems, the community contributes to help out. DNR's plan to log the 15 acres is  
29 devastating as the facts exist about prior logging incidents. DNR has access to approximately  
30 three million acres of state trust land. The preservation of 15 acres represents 0.000005% of  
31 the entire state forest acreage. The risks associated with logging the property do not make  
32 sense for such a small timber sale.

33  
34 **Matt Comisky, American Forest Resource Council**, thanked DNR field foresters,  
35 engineers, biologists, silviculturists, and product sales staff in Olympia for their efforts. It is  
36 very difficult when so many speakers are anti-forestry for educated and hard working  
37 professionals to bring forward timber sales based on ecological and sound management of  
38 state trust lands. Nearly 50% of the land base in state trust lands was off base for forest  
39 management in Western Washington resulting in 30% importation of softwood lumber into  
40 the country. If carbon is the major worry, the big system must be considered as importing  
41 30% of softwoods could eventually become 50% to 70% from overseas. That carbon  
42 footprint would be substantial. If you live in a wood house, stop throwing matches at it.

43  
44 **Bill Turner, Sierra Pacific Industries**, reported the company owns four saw mills in the  
45 state and two renewable energy plants. He thanked Commissioner Franz for scheduling the  
46 Lightning Talk. As a professional forester, he forgets all of the elements that are necessary

1 and it is important to learn what staff is working on. As a professional forester, he understands  
2 the work completed by staff and how they prepare timber sales and manage lands. Staff does  
3 a good job especially when 50% of the land base is set-aside. He participated in the tour with  
4 Thurston County Commissioners which highlighted the professionalism of staff and the work  
5 they complete.  
6

7 **Ed Chadd, Port Angeles,** cited comments on behalf of a colleague unable to attend the  
8 meeting in reference to the Chair Report. The graphics in the presentation appear to suggest  
9 impressive carbon gains but lack the numbers to back up the figures. Carbon graphs from  
10 2015 to 2024 provide even less detail. If DNR wants the public to understand, let alone  
11 respect its carbon efforts, the Department needs to show its work. One slide reflects a gain of  
12 4 metric tons of carbon per hectore over 20 years or 1.82 metric tons per acre or .091 metric  
13 tons per acre per year. The figures are alarmingly low and confirm estimates in the Forest  
14 Service Pacific Northwest Research Station Report commissioned by DNR. Even if harvest  
15 and manufacturing emissions are ignored, managed forests are close to becoming a net emitter  
16 of CO2. When DNR's legacy forest GIS layer was overlaid on a Nature Conservancy carbon  
17 calculator, the results depicted legacy forests sequestering between .4 and 1 metric tons of  
18 carbon per acre. That is four to ten times more than the rates touted by DNR in its  
19 presentation. It seems reasonable to suggest that legacy forests in DNR natural areas are  
20 responsible for a great deal of the positive direction of DNR's carbon graph.  
21

22 **Bryan Pelach** said legacy was not defined by the conservation community. It was  
23 promulgated in 2005 by DNR. Legacy trees and stands with legacy trees have been defined  
24 for nearly 20 years. It is a term consistently used not only by the conservation community but  
25 in larger discussions surrounding issues of forest management. Nevertheless, throughout the  
26 work of Washington Conservation Action, the organization has deliberately and consistently  
27 avoided the term "legacy forests" and instead focused on stand structure and function.  
28 Members care about structurally complex older forests that store carbon and provide habitat  
29 and other benefits. He explained the benefits of mature structurally complex carbon dense  
30 stands the need for protection, especially in the face of increased wildfire risk and uncertain  
31 climate futures. Members are excited the State Legislature appropriated \$83 million of  
32 Natural Climate Solutions funds over the next biennium to identify and permanently protect  
33 mature forests on state lands. DNR and its partners must build on the investment to identify  
34 and protect mature stands in parcels scheduled for harvest over the next two years. The  
35 legislature has mandated to improve forest futures and members look forward to achieving the  
36 mandate together.  
37

38 **Heath Heikkila** commented on how managed forests and wood products are part of the  
39 climate solution. It is not the timber industry but rather the IPCC that identified how managed  
40 forests with a sustainable harvest provide the largest long-term climate mitigation benefit.  
41 The IPCC also finds harvested wood products store carbon over the long-term and can be  
42 substituted for emissions-intensive materials. Wood products do in fact store carbon and  
43 provide an immediate avoid emissions benefit when they replace more energy intensive  
44 building materials. The UN is projecting large increases in demand for building products and  
45 other natural resources and has identified the need to meet the growing demand with  
46 renewable carbon-friendly wood products rather than more energy intensive materials such as

1 concrete and steel. DNR issued a report on the latest aerial surveys by DNR and the U.S  
2 Forest Service identifying 672,000 acres of Washington forest affected by mortality,  
3 defoliation, and disease with over half attributed to the bark beetle. It is a reminder of how  
4 forests including westside Douglas fir are not static and that mortality, insects, and wildfires  
5 result in large emissions that can be mitigated through active forest management and  
6 reforestation. Researchers at the University of Washington recently completed a study  
7 comparing climate mitigation benefits of federal, state, and private lands accounting for  
8 carbon storage, wood products, and emissions associated with wildfire and timber harvest.  
9 The study concluded that 70% of the annual growth of forest service land end up burning or  
10 left to decay on the forest floor as dead biomass resulting in significant carbon emissions.  
11 The State Legislature has directed completion of a similar study of state lands by DNR.  
12

13 **Lee First** reported she is a resident of southern Thurston County and serves as Twin Harbors  
14 water keeper working to protect water quality and habitat in the Chehalis and Willapa  
15 watersheds. She spoke to the proposed In the Pipeline timber sale scheduled for auction in the  
16 fall. The site is located in the Willapa River watershed which has less than half of 1% of old  
17 growth remaining. Within the watershed, there are no wilderness areas or national parks. The  
18 largest remaining old growth stand is the 274-acre Don Bonker Cedar Grove on Long Island  
19 in Willapa Bay. She recently visited the site of the proposed timber sale and conducted a  
20 ground check and measured six trees with a diameter of 55 inches at breast height. Four trees  
21 were over 60 inches in diameter and one was 87 inches in diameter. A small stream was  
22 identified that did not appear on the map. Removing trees from the stream's buffer and  
23 logging the area will contribute to water quality issues as well as erosion and flooding risks.  
24 For the sake of the climate, the Board should pull the sale as well as others with legacy  
25 forests. Carbon storage in those forests with trees over 21 inches in diameter represent a tiny  
26 percentage of forests but they store 42% of above ground carbon. She asked the Board to  
27 reserve the last remaining forest carbon banks.  
28

29 Chair Franz advised of ongoing conversations with the Thurston County Board of  
30 County Commissioner regarding the Delica timber sale to use existing tools to provide a win-  
31 win solution. Currently, no sales are planned in the area of Summit Lake pending the  
32 outcome of those discussions.  
33

#### 34 **CHAIR REPORTS**

##### 35 **Variable Retention Harvest Briefing**

36 **Dr. Daniel Donato PhD and Bill Wells, Acting Forest Resources Division Manager**  
37

38 Mr. Wells reported the briefing is on DNR's variable retention harvest system. He introduced  
39 Dr. Daniel Donato who has worked as a DNR Scientist for the last 10 years. He shared Dr.  
40 Donato's academic degrees noting that he received his PhD in Forest Science from Morgan  
41 State University and was a Fulbright Scholar studying mature and old growth forests in  
42 Europe. As an early Career Fellow with the Ecological Society of America, Dr. Donato  
43 authored seventy peer review scientific publications and is currently the most highly cited  
44 scientist of all Washington State agencies. He serves as an affiliate Assistant Professor in the  
45 School of Environmental and Forest Science at the University of Washington.  
46

1 Dr. Donato said the briefing covers information on scientific perspectives on the concept of  
2 variable retention harvest (VRH) and managing older forests from an ecological and science  
3 foundation. He oversees research and monitoring programs under the auspices of the HCP  
4 mostly surrounding older forest habitat, as well as research on wildfires. He serves as the  
5 agency's designated expert on old growth.  
6

7 VRH moves away from an agronomic model of forest management for managing forests as  
8 ecosystems by using ecological models of national forest dynamics and disturbance regimes  
9 for conducting forest management. VRH emphasizes complexity over simplicity. A core  
10 tenant of ecological forestry is continuity among forest generations or the idea of retaining  
11 legacies (since the 1980s) by retaining elements from one stand to the next to provide some  
12 continuity in terms of structure and ecological function. Some other core tenants include  
13 conserving mature and older growth forests and longer harvest rotations by maintaining an  
14 element of older forest structure on the landscape. Longer harvest rotations ensure the  
15 remaining landscape is not in a constant young state.  
16

17 Another tenant is promoting all successional stages including diverse early seral through old  
18 growth. Diverse early seral is the stage of forest development following a disturbance prior to  
19 trees reoccupying a site. Two common practices within ecological forestry are variable  
20 density thinning and variable retention harvest. There is a misconception that conducting  
21 ecological forestry never creates large openings, which is not consistent with science literature  
22 on ecological forestry.  
23

24 Dr. Donato shared some visual images of a thin stand selectively harvested to promote forest  
25 development for older forest structure and a variable retention harvest unit. Another image  
26 was an example of a VRH from western Oregon with an opening that includes a mix of  
27 clumped tree retention and disbursed tree retention (individual trees scattered). The goal of  
28 VRH is to avoid simple monoculture single plantation structures.  
29

30 Science literature is reaching a consensus in terms of ecological benefit when weighing the  
31 benefits of clumped versus disbursed retention. Clumped retention tends to provide more  
32 ecological benefits as it retains more areas of intact understory and a variety of other benefits,  
33 such as greater survivorship and less blow down. Disbursed retention tends to score better for  
34 aesthetics and public perception.  
35

36 As ecological forestry is based on consistency of natural disturbance models, most of Western  
37 Washington and the mountains experience infrequent fires occurring several decades or  
38 centuries apart. However, when fire occurs, it tends to be of high severity destroying nearly  
39 100% of trees over a large area. Dr. Donato displayed a series of photographs depicting  
40 recent fires in southwest Washington and western Oregon. He noted that large fire-created  
41 openings are not a novel phenomenon as a result of climate change or forest management or  
42 mismanagement. Large openings are inherent within the DNA of the landscape. Wind  
43 storms also create similar openings on a smaller scale. The openings create a cycle of forest  
44 establishment and development of old growth with cycles of fire and stands resetting again.  
45 Those cycles of stand replacement, resetting, and growth are part of the landscape. Based on  
46 ecological forestry text books and other literature, VRH is consistent with the natural

1 disturbance regime by creating openings that is consistent with the fire regime of Western  
2 Washington forests.  
3

4 DNR was among the first agencies to operationalize VRH at scale. Although not a specific  
5 defined objective, the outcome of retention by DNR around streams and retention clumps  
6 resulted in 30% retention of units, which is consistent with best practices guidelines in  
7 ecological forestry literature. As half of state lands is set-aside for conservation, some of the  
8 retention continues to add to the total set-aside. DNR's policies and procedures prioritize  
9 retaining the largest and true legacy trees (trees predating the origin of the stand) present in a  
10 stand. Written objectives also dictate the retention of snags and downed wood, which has  
11 often proven to be difficult because many stands do not have any snags of any size. Where  
12 large snags are present, strict safety guidelines are dictated by the Department of Labor and  
13 Industries.  
14

15 Dr. Donato shared some visual examples of landscape openings reflective of similar patterns  
16 caused by fire-created openings. The tenants of ecological forestry is not an objective  
17 established by DNR nor is it codified in any mandate or law. DNR utilizes ecological models  
18 from natural disturbance regimes that results in complexity in stand and landscape structure  
19 rather than simplicity. Continuity is a core tenant of VRH practiced by DNR. DNR conserves  
20 matures and old growth forests under the old forest growth policies. The policies are liberally  
21 defined in terms of old growth. Ecological literature does not identify old growth until trees  
22 are 200 to 250 years of age dependent upon stand structure. DNR's old growth policy dictates  
23 old growth as 157 years or pre-1850. That latent mature stage of forest development that is  
24 starting to form the old growth structure is included in DNR's old growth definition.  
25 Secondly, approximately 93% of stands estimated to have a pre-1900 age have been set-aside  
26 in DNR conservation areas. At a threshold age of 1945, the percentage is 78%. The bulk of  
27 mature forests have been set-aside on DNR lands.  
28

29 In terms of longer harvest rotations compared to industrial rotations of 35 years, DNR's  
30 average of 60 to 70 years is nearly double. In a vacuum without balancing other competing  
31 objectives, it might be possible to extend rotations with more ecological benefits. Promoting  
32 all successional stages including diverse early seral has occurred in all age classes or  
33 promoted through the HCP. Diverse early seral is missing whereby the stand is not  
34 dominated by trees following a fire or a harvest. No production landowner has determined a  
35 process for developing diverse early seral because of the time horizon and the certainty of the  
36 next timber rotation. DNR has implemented a research project to explore the feasibility of  
37 fostering a diverse early seral phase while maintaining a stand on a timber trajectory as part of  
38 a landscape experiment on the Olympic Peninsula.  
39

40 Dr. Brown commented that DNR has policies that dictate the minimum level of retention with  
41 some variability in terms of leave tree areas. As mentioned, it appears there is relative  
42 consistency of approximately 30% retention. He asked about the reasons for not increasing  
43 the level of variability in landscape conditions. Dr. Donato affirmed that within DNR  
44 practices, retention averages range between 30% and 35%. DNR's practice of VRH enables  
45 more site specificity in terms of protecting certain features.  
46

1 Superintendent Reykdal asked whether the largest contribution are leave trees that otherwise  
2 could be harvested in the absence of policy or riparian protection. Dr. Donato said many  
3 riparian buffers account for some of the total; however, the policies are above and beyond  
4 forest practice minimums.  
5

6 Mr. Wells added that RMZ protections and slopes typically comprise the largest amount of  
7 forest retention; however, leave tree strategies of eight trees per acre may not appear to be  
8 many except when considering a 50-acre harvest unit where the leave tree rate is 400 trees. In  
9 some large leave tree areas, several acres are often added to the unit with additional leave  
10 trees.  
11

12 Mr. Cahill asked about any difference in retention between Eastern and Western Washington  
13 forests. Dr. Donato affirmed the context and outcomes are different. VRH has an ecological  
14 basis with more occurrences on the westside; however some areas in Eastern Washington also  
15 practice VRH. Eastern Washington typically has drier forests with a surface low-severity fire  
16 regime. Maintaining constant forest cover and a thinning regime makes more sense in those  
17 forest types dependent upon the location.  
18

19 Dr. Donato briefed the Board on the concept of legacy forests. The term “legacy forests” has  
20 been used frequently and has some specific meanings. The term is new with variable  
21 definitions that are often unclear other than a heavy focus on pre-World War II age threshold  
22 of trees that were not planted. Most of the stands visited by staff falling within that category  
23 are second-growth forests following early clear-cut harvesting. Some are retention trees with  
24 some scattered remnants that are now considered isolated legacy trees. It is also important to  
25 distinguish legacy trees from old growth trees, which are a separate category of trees. Among  
26 forest ecologists and scientists he has spoken with, they have not uncovered a clear definition  
27 of the term other than it may have a compelling ring and invokes good PR. Legacy forests are  
28 not based in peer-reviewed science and there is no ecological basis for the criteria.  
29 Essentially, the stands are a legacy of past forest management. One tenant of ecologically  
30 minded forestry is long rotations. Long rotation forestry will often result in much older trees.  
31 On private industrial lands, legacy trees would have been harvested 30 to 40 years ago. With  
32 the advent of legacy trees it speaks to DNR’s longer rotations on state lands.  
33

34 There has been an emphasis on pre-World War II criterion, which speaks to the age factor and  
35 the value of age. By itself, age is not a useful criterion. Two stands of similar age can be  
36 different in terms of old growth structure and tree size differentiation. Age by itself is not  
37 sufficient to identify a stand. One of the notions surrounding pre-World War II origin was the  
38 difference in logging practices prior to World War II and the onset of widespread industrial  
39 clear-cutting resulting in different types of stands. Compared to natural origin mature stands,  
40 many legacy stands are lacking specific structural elements. Mature forests have conservation  
41 value but not all are the same. The best way to evaluate legacy trees is by stand structure, tree  
42 size/character, development potential, biomass/carbon storage and productivity of the site, and  
43 landscape context. Placing stands in buckets based primarily on age is too simplistic. An  
44 example is a stand 30 years older than another that might be much less structurally developed  
45 than a younger stand.  
46

1 Using the core tenants of good habitat provisions using landscape conservation biology  
2 perspective speaks to habitat that is more functional when located in larger patches and  
3 connected. When the HCP was adopted, habitat areas were designated in large chunks and in  
4 areas adjacent to federal lands where the bulk of spotted owl habitat is located to create more  
5 contiguous blocks of habitat resulting in higher conservation value.

6  
7 The Northwest Forest Plan is a landmark region-wide conservation strategy for spotted owl  
8 habitat within the Pacific Northwest. Late successional reserves or LSR are managed for  
9 large areas of mature and old forest habitat.

10  
11 Overall, 'legacy forests' as currently defined are not necessarily the best or most important  
12 candidates for mature forest conservation because of little ecological justification or scientific  
13 basis.

14  
15 Dr. Donato briefed the Board on long-term monitoring of old-forest habitat and carbon under  
16 DNR's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

17  
18 The question is whether there are trends in older forest habitat in spatial configuration and  
19 aboveground carbon that are different since the HCP was implemented. The method used to  
20 track progress was GNN data, and independent source (US Forest Service PNW Research  
21 Station) that is measured each year enabling updates. It is possible to go back to the time of  
22 satellite launch in the mid 1980s. The answer is old-forest habitat is shifting to HCP intended  
23 areas at a rate faster than anticipated. Areas measured included riparian management zones,  
24 upland conservation areas, and "GEM" lands where forestry rotation is emphasized.  
25 Aboveground carbon storage is shifting toward conservation areas and is increasing.

26  
27 Another question is whether across westside HCP lands, trends in older forest habitat, spatial  
28 configuration, and aboveground carbon are different since implementation of the HCP. The  
29 answer affirms that as older-forest habitat is increasing in (shifting to) HCP-intended areas,  
30 connectivity is increasing, and carbon is shifting similar to older-forest reflecting an overall  
31 increase in forest C storage.

32  
33 Variable Retention Harvest is a component of ecological forestry that is grounded in  
34 ecological models of natural disturbance regimes. DNR's implementation is consistent with  
35 the principles of ecological forestry. The term legacy forest as recently used is not old growth  
36 or necessarily the highest ecological-value stands for old forest functions. Mature forests on  
37 DNR lands are not managed on a piecemeal basis but rather through the federally approved  
38 landscape strategy.

39  
40 Dr. Brown pointed out that DNR is managing for legacy trees rather than legacy forests  
41 although DNR manages old growth forests by policy, managing for variable retention by  
42 policy, and that variable retention is focused around by practice on legacy elements of the  
43 forest to create structure at the stand level and the landscape level to afford variability in  
44 structure. Dr. Donato affirmed his interpretation.

45  
46 Dr. Brown asked how DNR's practice of ecological forestry compares with other large



1 landowners. Dr. Donato said some of the earliest implementers were located in British  
2 Columbia. However, he is uncertain as to the extent of the practice today. Based on his  
3 discussions with Dr. Franklin, DNR is the gold standard.

4  
5 Mr. Cahill commented that ecological forestry manages for a number of objectives. He  
6 questioned how much carbon sequestration was incorporated within the management  
7 practices. Dr. Donato said the objectives have emphasized habitat.

8  
9 Mr. Wells added that an objective for carbon sequestration was not included separately other  
10 than for the resilience of the forest and the complexity of the forest structures across space  
11 and time. As a result, an increase in carbon sequestration is occurring in places where added  
12 protections are provided.

13  
14 Dr. Donato remarked that his understanding of forest carbon sciences best practices is to  
15 conserve a portion of the landscape in mature and old high biomass structures and with longer  
16 rotations.

17  
18 Superintendent Reykdal commented on the discretion afforded in the process of identifying  
19 leave trees and in other practices where the Department is managing beyond standards. It  
20 may be the lack of understanding of how those processes occur that results in many people  
21 questioning the process and pointing to the need to consider a unique solution for a specific  
22 area. Often, public feedback creates a different process. He questioned why changes do not  
23 occur on the front-end rather than the tail end of the process. Mr. Wells explained that DNR  
24 operates under a forestry handbook of policy and procedures for field staff to follow when  
25 implementing timber sales. The policies and procedures are prescriptive to a point for a  
26 reason because of the uniqueness of each acre of land making it impossible to prescribe an  
27 outcome that applies to all circumstances encountered in the field. There can be  
28 inconsistencies across the landscape in all regions due to the uniqueness of each landscape.

29  
30 Chair Franz noted that the Board's retreat often includes a tour of forestland with staff  
31 identifying each step for a number of different projects. During that process it has been  
32 possible to learn how staff pursues and lays out the process for a timber sale from beginning  
33 to end and how changes may have occurred based on feedback from stakeholders and the  
34 community.

35  
36 Commissioner Janicki requested a future presentation on the carbon sequestration capacity of  
37 stand ages for a better understanding of how planting new trees contributes to carbon  
38 sequestration.

39  
40 Chair Franz acknowledged the requests and offered to schedule more opportunities for  
41 information and discussion.

42  
43 Chair Franz thanked Dr. Donato and Mr. Wells for the informative briefing.

44  
45 **LAND TRANSACTIONS**

46 **Matt Matulovich and Bob Winslow, Transaction Project Manager, Conservation,**

1           **Recreation and transactions**  
2

3           Mr. Matulovich reported Quimper East and Quimper West are trust sale transfers from DNR  
4 to Jefferson County. Both properties are located on the north side of the Olympic Peninsula  
5 and Jefferson County. Quimper West is Common School and Escheat Trusts and Quimper  
6 East is Common School Trust.  
7

8           Bob Winslow described the Department's Trust Land Transfer (TLT) Lease Program. The  
9 TLT Program typically involves fee transfers where DNR transfers all rights of a property.  
10 DNR transacted some transfers in leases with 50-year terms with most renewable at the end of  
11 50 years. The Legislature provided \$50 million for administration of the TLT program. Most  
12 of the properties under lease are high value properties with approximately 80% of the value  
13 comprised of timber. The requirement for timber value was eliminated by the Legislature.  
14 Early in the program, situations were created with lands of high value and low timber value  
15 that could not be transferred. A tool was subsequently created through the TLT program.  
16 Originally, 28 TLT leases were transacted. Of the 28 leases, seven have been cancelled  
17 through fee transfer, one lease was surrendered by the Grantee, two leases are pending fee  
18 transfer decisions, and seven leases are considering a fee transfer. DNR has not transacted  
19 any TLT leases since the 2009-2011 biennium. One shortfall of the lease option was the  
20 ability for the land to return to the Department. Many lessees refrained from investing in  
21 improvements to the property for various purposes knowing that at the end of the term the  
22 property could revert to DNR. Over time, the lessees desired more certainty through a fee  
23 transfer.  
24

25           Mr. Matulovich reported the Quimper West property is 81.1 acres zoned Rural Residential 20.  
26 The highest and best use is likely residential home sites. Jefferson County plans to keep the  
27 property in conservation in line with the lease terms and DNR deed restrictions.  
28

29           Quimper East entails a transfer of 27.63 acres with zoning of Rural Residential 20 with the  
30 highest and best use of one home site. Jefferson County plans to keep the site in conservation  
31 in alignment with lease terms and DNR deed restrictions,  
32

33           Jefferson County leased the properties in 2002 through 50-year leases. Both leases include an  
34 option to purchase, as well as extending the term an additional 50 years. Following receipt of  
35 the direct transfer request from Jefferson County, the county provided administrative funds to  
36 cover transaction costs.  
37

38           Quimper East was recently appraised at \$387,000 with DNR receiving \$371,200 as a lease  
39 payment in 2009. The balance due for purchase is \$15,800 designated to the Real Property  
40 Replacement Account.  
41

42           Quimper West was recently appraised at \$1,352,000. At the commencement of the lease in  
43 2009, DNR received \$985,000 allocated to the Common School Construction Account. To  
44 complete the transaction, Jefferson Council will pay DNR \$367,000 for allocation to the Real  
45 Property Replacement Account.  
46

1 Mr. Matulovich invited questions. The Board offered no questions.

2  
3 MOTION: Superintendent Reykdal moved to approve Resolution 1600.

4  
5 SECOND: Commissioner Janicki seconded the motion.

6  
7 ACTION: The motion carried unanimously.

8  
9  
10 MOTION: Superintendent Reykdal moved to approve Resolution 1601.

11  
12 SECOND: Commissioner Janicki seconded the motion.

13  
14 ACTION: The motion carried unanimously.

15  
16 **TIMBER SALES - Action**

17 **Auction Results for April 2023, Fiscal Year Update, and Proposed Timber Sales for**  
18 **June 2023**

19 **Joe Koontz, Assistant Division Manager of Timber Sales, Product Sales & Leasing**  
20 **Division**

21  
22 Mr. Koontz presented the results of the April timber sales. The Department offered 12 sales  
23 and sold 10 timber sales. The timber sales totaled 38.9 mmbf of timber and approximately  
24 \$16.3 million in sales for distribution to trust beneficiaries. The average stumpage price was  
25 \$419 per mbf with the auctions generating an average of 3.4 bids per sale. Of the two unsold  
26 sales, one sale will be reoffered in May. Mr. Koontz invited questions.

27  
28 Dr. Brown asked why only one of the unsold sales was rescheduled for sale. Staff advised  
29 that the sale was a small sale located in a natural area. The April sale was the second attempt  
30 to offer that particular timber sale. Staff plans to repackage and reoffer the sale.

31  
32 Mr. Koontz reviewed the status of Fiscal Year 23 planned volume. The graph reflects current  
33 plan for auction volume, forecasted volumes for the remainder of the year, sold volume, and  
34 timber sales reoffered. The projected fiscal year for Western Washington has been adjusted to  
35 reflect 438 mmbf. For Eastern Washington, the amount is 63 mmbf for the fiscal year. The  
36 figures reflect a reduction of approximately 15 mmbf from three sales moved to fiscal year  
37 2024.

38  
39 Mr. Koontz invited questions on the fiscal year update. The Board offered no questions.

40  
41 Mr. Koontz presented nine proposed sales totaling approximately 45.3 mmbf with an  
42 estimated value of \$15.6 million. The expected stumpage price is \$345 mbf. Mr. Koontz  
43 reviewed the type of sales offered for auction. Mr. Koontz reviewed a pie chart depicting the  
44 estimated revenue to be generated for each trust.

45  
46 Mr. Koontz invited questions on the proposed timber sales. There were no comments or

1 questions from the Board.  
2

3 Mr. Koontz provided clarification in response to comments by the public regarding the Plumb  
4 Bob timber sale. In early April, all four units of the Plumb Bob timber sale were evaluated by  
5 him and staff experts from the National Heritage Program to assess the plant community of  
6 Douglas fir, Hemlock, Rhododendron, and Evergreen Huckleberry. The site assessment was  
7 conducted utilizing a *Field Manual for Applying Rapid Ecological Integrity Assessments in*  
8 *Upland Plant Communities of Washington State* (2020). The protocol was not conducted  
9 from the road and was conducted in the field. The observations from the road were of  
10 adjacent stands, as stated in the report.  
11

12 DNR uses standards to group the delineation of plant association occurrences. An elemental  
13 occurrence (EO) is an area of land and or water where the species of a natural community is  
14 or was present. An elemental occurrence should have practical conservation value for the  
15 element as evidenced by potential, continued, or historical presence and/or regular occurrence  
16 at a given location. The elemental occurrence data standards provide guidelines for decisions.  
17 The EO ranking is determined by completing an environmental integrity assessment of the  
18 specific stand of the ecosystem in question. Common ecosystems with relatively few threats  
19 receive a conservation status of a G1 or S5 and are considered common while all critically  
20 impaired ecosystems would receive a G1 or S1 status even if in poor condition. EOs are  
21 entered into the Washington Natural Heritage Program database and used for a variety of  
22 conservation and management outcomes.  
23

24 This plant community has a conservation rating of G2/S2 and deemed to be in fair condition;  
25 however, it did not score high enough on the ecological integrity assessment to be considered  
26 an elemental occurrence due to the fragmented and small area sizes of the plant communities.  
27 Although the plant community is present and in fair condition, the ranking does not meet the  
28 EO criteria and is subsequently rated in a low category for conservation value.  
29

30 Dr. Brown asked about the agency's response if the ranking had been higher. Mr. Koontz  
31 said if the plant community had rated higher and was imperiled, staff would evaluate the site,  
32 block the site, and provide a buffer. The action is dependent upon the ranking.  
33

34 Superintendent Reykdal inquired about any other current G1/S1 identifications. Mr. Koontz  
35 verified that there are some rankings in the database and some are preserved of the same plant  
36 association in the surrounding area.  
37

38 Dr. Brown remarked about the timing of questions with respect to the process of planning and  
39 preparing a timber sale and whether during that process similar information could be pointed  
40 out about imperiled species earlier in the process. He questioned the Department's process  
41 for surveying a timber sale to identify those kinds of plant communities.  
42

43 Todd Welker, Deputy Supervisor for State Uplands advised that in this circumstance, staff  
44 was notified of the presence of the plant community; however, a better job of training staff is  
45 needed to identify plant communities during field visits to refer to the National Heritage  
46 Program prior to initiating the SEPA process.

1  
2 Dr. Brown agreed it would be important to identify the issues early to avoid backtracking.  
3

4 Mr. Koontz requested consideration of a motion to approve the proposed sales for June 2023  
5 as presented.  
6

7 Superintendent Reykdal requested a copy of the map of the Normal Schools Trust  
8 designations. Chair Franz affirmed the request and noted the maps are also published on the  
9 website.  
10

11 Dr. Brown said during the public comments there were a number of specific sales of concern  
12 by several individuals. Additionally, the Legislature appropriated funding to help DNR  
13 identify and conserve lands. He asked about the agency's process as he is not convinced that  
14 decisions about individual sales to approve or not approve is the right method for prioritizing  
15 the expenditure of those funds across all state lands. He would like a thoughtful process that  
16 prioritizes the expenditure of those funds toward the maximum benefits gained, such as  
17 carbon storage or habitat protection while balancing those actions with the Board's fiduciary  
18 responsibility to the trust. The issue is moving forward with the proposed sales knowing that  
19 a due diligence process will be developed.  
20

21 Chair Franz advised of the Department's ongoing efforts over the last year identifying higher  
22 ecological valued forests for a multitude of benefits. Staff plans to present an approach and  
23 process for information, questions, engagement of the Board, engagement of public, and  
24 engagement of stakeholders that will be based on science and understanding of the lands and  
25 its value for all benefits.  
26

27 Mr. Welker added that Mr. Emmons is scheduled to provide the Board with a presentation in  
28 June on the allocation of the appropriation approved by the Legislature. Some of the funds  
29 are designated to purchase forestlands and a provision to set-aside up to 2,000 acres for  
30 conservation nominated by the counties through submittal of recommendations to DNR.  
31

32 Chair Franz noted the funding will not be available until July 2023. Staff is examining  
33 pending timber sales to identify sales that might be suited for carbon sequestration, TLT, or  
34 other conservation efforts. Discussions are also occurring with counties that have been  
35 engaged with respect to a different approach for parcels.  
36

37 MOTION: Dr. Brown moved to approve the proposed sales as presented by staff.  
38

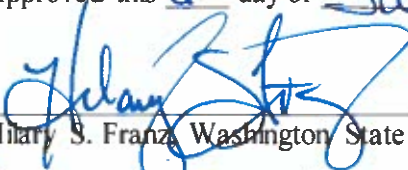
39 MOTION: Commissioner Janicki seconded the motion.  
40

41 ACTION: The motion was approved unanimously.  
42

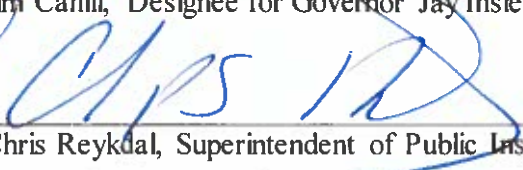
43 **ADJOURNMENT**

44 With there being no further business, Chair Franz adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.  
45  
46

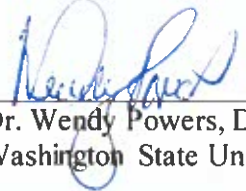
Approved this 6<sup>TH</sup> day of June, 2023

  
Hilary S. Franz, Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands

  
Jim Cahill, Designee for Governor Jay Inslee

  
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

  
Lisa Janicki, Commissioner, Skagit County

  
Dr. Wendy Powers, Dean, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences,  
Washington State University

Approved via Webinar  
Dan Brown, Director, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, University of Washington

Attest:

  
Tami Kellogg, Board Coordinator

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
Puget Sound Meeting Services, [psmsoly@earthlink.net](mailto:psmsoly@earthlink.net)