

Western Washington Sustainable Harvest Calculation

Answers to Questions Asked During the Public Webinar

November 9, 2021

The following is a summary of the questions asked and responses given, verbally and in writing, during the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) public webinar conducted as part of scoping for the 2025 to 2034 sustainable harvest calculation environmental impact statement. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually. Written questions were recorded using the “Q&A” feature in Zoom. All questions (written and verbal) were answered by DNR staff.

Questions Answered Verbally Before the Presentation

Question Number	Question	Response	Asked by
1 and 2	Are there any elected officials in attendance?	Yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Honorable Lisa Janicki, Skagit County Commissioner• The Honorable Tom Lannen, Skamania County Commissioner	Heidi Tate

Questions Answered in Writing During the Presentation (Summarized from the meeting Q&A transcript)

Question number	Question	Response	Asked by
3	How is anything sustainable, given the climate crisis? Why not stop logging and allow the forests to absorb carbon? Isn't that a better use of trust lands, securing a future for our children and all?	Climate change is just one of the important issues associated with the sustainable harvest calculation that DNR will consider. Heidi Tate, the western Washington Sustainable Harvest Calculation project manager and tonight's webinar presenter, will discuss how you can ensure that your comments can be incorporated into this scoping process, and will share information on how to submit comments at the end of the presentation.	Teri Wright

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Question number	Question	Response	Asked by
4, 5, and 6	Questions arose about the closing date for accepting comments due to an incorrect date (November 9, 2021) in the presentation.	Responses clarified that the actual closing date for the scoping comment period is December 9, 2021.	Matt Comisky and Doug Cooper
7	Given the concern about climate change and the governor's announcement on Saturday about the need for climate-friendly construction, will DNR be considering the impact of reduced harvests on the commensurate increased use of energy-intensive materials like concrete and steel?	DNR is still scoping the environmental analysis, but this is exactly the type of information that DNR is seeking from commenters. Please submit your suggestions in the scoping comments.	Todd Myers
8	Although the western and eastern Washington harvest calculations are separate, will DNR be considering the impact of the loss of timber infrastructure on the state's ability to address forest health issues across the state?	This also sounds like a topic that you would like DNR to analyze, so please include it in your scoping comments to DNR.	Todd Myers
9	DNR uses language such as “undivided loyalty to its beneficiaries,” which includes “future generations.” I saw on your website that the economic benefit of DNR’s public land harvests are their first priority. Are you willing to change this in our present pertinent issue of climate change, and the incredible value of unharvested forests? It seems that the language of loyalty and future generations now includes halting or limiting harvests to help our future generations.	Thank you for your question. We are encouraging everyone to submit comments to DNR during the comment period.	Jessica Randall

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Question number	Question	Response	Asked by
10 and 17*	<p>How will the sustainable harvest calculation process be revised in the event the Washington Supreme Court case rules for the plaintiffs, OR if DNR settles with the industry/beneficiary lawsuits?</p> <p>I understand DNR's concern about not commenting on legal issues. But I think it's fair to ask, what DNR is doing differently this time around in the sustainable harvest calculation in light of the pending industry/beneficiary lawsuits?</p>	<p>DNR will address the court's decision when it comes. However, at this time DNR is not responding to questions about active litigation. You are welcome to contact the Attorney General's office for more information.</p> <p>This is not the appropriate venue for discussing ongoing litigation involving DNR. The important point here is that even with ongoing lawsuits, DNR has an obligation to conduct the calculation. DNR will take any new information under consideration as it emerges, whether that information comes through a lawsuit or by another process.</p>	Peter Goldman
11 and 14	<p>When DNR did the last decadal sustainable harvest calculation, did you have Objective 2, the point you mentioned related to climate protection?</p> <p>Does DNR's State Environmental Policy Act analysis look at greenhouse gas emissions projected for each alternative?</p>	<p>Yes, the Objective #2 language was also included in the 2019 calculation. Specifically, the objective related to climate change in 2019 stated, "Consider climate change as part of the affected environment, analyze climate change impacts and benefits of the alternatives, and identify possible mitigation measures that will reduce or eliminate any identified adverse environmental climate change impacts of the proposal."</p>	Mary Jean Ryan

*Question 17 was also addressed verbally after the presentation.

Questions Answered Verbally After the Presentation (Summarized from the meeting recording)

Question Number	Question	Response	Asked by
12a	Is DNR expecting to have a sustainable harvest calculation that is done prior to the next decadal period?	Yes, DNR will do its best to complete the western Washington sustainable harvest calculation prior to the start of the next decadal period, which is why DNR is starting the process now. DNR also recognizes that there are diverse opinions regarding the sustainable harvest level and that this is a long process. DNR will produce a draft environmental impact statement, a final environmental impact statement, and a financial analysis. This is a lot for the public and the Board of Natural Resources to digest in the given time period, but DNR staff will do the best it can.	Rod Fleck
12b	Is DNR expecting to have a sustainable harvest calculation that includes outputs by trust and by county for all State Forest lands?	DNR will produce many outputs for all State Forest lands in the environmental and financial analyses. DNR anticipates that outputs will be similar to those used in the previous calculation, which were reported by County for the State Forest lands, but not reported by County for other trusts. DNR encourages this issue to be submitted as a scoping comment.	
12c	How exactly will DNR track its harvest activities in relationship to its sustainable harvest calculation numbers, to avoid the development of a significant arrearage over the course of any future decadal period?	Tracking harvest activities to avoid the development of arrearage is something DNR is working to improve. Angus Brodie, Deputy Supervisor of State Uplands, has been giving and will continue to give regular updates to the Board of Natural Resources. The last calculation (2015 to 2024) was completed in 2019, which was part way through the planning decade, making it difficult to catch up, get reporting up to speed, and make sure deliverables are met. There is little room for correction in that circumstance. Having the harvest calculation completed by the beginning of fiscal year 2025 will go a long way to help with tracking and ideally minimize arrearage. Mr. Fleck is encouraged to provide comments on specific items he would like to see DNR address, in terms of policy considerations or the environmental analysis.	

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13	Will the sustainable harvest calculation analyses include maps of stand age in the ranges at least of 40 to 60 years, 60 to 80 years, 80 to 100 years, 100 to 120 years, and older than 120 years, if such stand ages currently exist?	This is an example of the type of information DNR is interested in hearing from the public. If interested in seeing this type of data, please include the request in the scoping comments.	Don Parks
15	Does DNR’s State Environmental Policy Act analysis look at greenhouse gas emissions projected for each alternative?	DNR is interested in hearing about this and any other thoughts on the topic in the scoping comments. Typically, DNR will look at available information and what DNR has done in past analyses when deciding how proceed with a new analysis. Another important step DNR typically takes is to identify other methods or literature that would inform the environmental analysis, including carbon storage. Your ideas on this would be useful in the scoping comments.	
16	How will DNR consider the Deloitte report in their sustainable harvest calculation?	<p>DNR is setting a sustainable harvest calculation because it is required by statute and because it is an element of good land stewardship. In terms of the role the Deloitte report would play, the sustainable harvest calculation relates to DNR’s largest asset class, the timber asset class, so the sustainable harvest calculation plays a role in trust land performance. However, DNR would be interested in obtaining comments on how the Deloitte report should be used in the process of setting the sustainable harvest level.</p> <p>There are many and various ways that the Deloitte report connects to the way DNR manages land and there are sideboards on how to set a sustainable harvest level. It would be helpful to have more specifics in comments submitted, to help DNR understand which parts of the report should be applied. DNR will consider any such comments.</p>	Mike Town

Question Number	Question	Response	Asked by
18	Will the sustainable harvest calculation address the dependency of specific rural communities at the county level on timber supply from State Lands, and compare those dependencies to communities that also utilize logs from private sources?	This is a good question and makes important points that should be incorporated into scoping comments. While preparing the previous (2015 to 2024) sustainable harvest calculation environmental impact statement, DNR concurrently prepared an environmental impact statement for the Marbled Murrelet Long-term Conservation Strategy. This concurrent analysis had to meet both the National Environmental Policy Act and the State Environmental Policy Act; therefore, DNR conducted a socio-economic analysis. In this current environmental analysis process, DNR will need to conduct an environmental justice analysis. This analysis is new to DNR and DNR is interested in hearing ideas from the public on how to go about conducting this analysis. Potentially, the analysis Mr. Parks is asking about could fall under the environmental justice umbrella, but DNR has not yet determined the scope of the analysis and is interested in hearing suggestions from the public. Mr. Parks is urged to submit this question in the scoping comments.	Don Parks
19	Will the economic analysis be limited to the net present value calculation, similar to the last one? Or will there be an attempt to explore the larger economic impacts from the alternatives analyzed?	In the past, DNR has conducted an environmental analysis and written an environmental impact statement that complies with the State Environmental Policy Act and has conducted a separate financial analysis. DNR will probably do something similar for this sustainable harvest calculation but is interested in hearing thoughts on how to conduct the analysis. It sounds as if there is interest in the financial analysis exploring larger financial impacts. Because the financial analysis is an appendix to the environmental impact statement, this is a relevant and interesting comment to submit in this scoping process.	Matt Comisky

Question Number	Question	Response	Asked by
20	What improvements have been, or will be, made to the (1) inventory data, and/or (2) harvest calculation model?	This is a complex subject. Those who are regular followers of DNR know that the legislature has provided DNR with funding to do additional work on its inventory, growth and yield, and harvest modeling. DNR is currently scoping this work and the work will continue through the fiscal year 2021 to 2023 biennium. This means DNR is working on making improvements, which is an ongoing process. This is an opportunity to invest in data and information for the next sustainable harvest calculation. DNR will use the best available information at the time to make a decision on the harvest level. Inclusion of any concerns or thoughts would be helpful in the scoping comments, which DNR will consider when deciding what goes into the forest estate model and the environmental analysis.	Rod Fleck

Question Answered in Writing at the End of the Webinar (Summarized from the meeting Q&A transcript)

Question Number	Question	Response	Asked by
21	This article* references Southern Resident killer whales; however, the principle of acknowledging cumulative effects is relevant here—how does DNR plan to review their practices related to how their supposedly singular practices relate to the whole environment? Basically, how will you avoid death by a thousand cuts, re: harvesting forests needed to remain whole?	The environmental impact statement will evaluate cumulative effects. During this scoping process, DNR is looking for comments on the scope of the analysis. Please include these issues in the scoping comments.	Teri Wright

*The link provided by the commenter was not included in this document because it does not work.