

Questions - Capitol State Forest Logging: Bears U1 and U2

5/10/2024 Informal meeting with Project Managers from the Department of Natural Resources. We appreciate their willingness to meet with us.

Meeting Purpose: Overall review of the logging process and the trusts that are funded through logging. The fiduciary responsibilities are mandated by the state constitution and the area, particularly rural Washington, has a long-standing history and a rich association with the logging industry and culture.

- *Items in **RED** indicated questions that were not asked, not answered at the meeting during the natural flow of conversation, or notes were not taken.*
- *Additional notes have been added in **BLUE** if information was found online or in public record after the meeting.*
- *In July, this document was shared with the DNR for review and comments. Any clarifications or additional comments by project managers will be added in **GREEN**.*

Project managers sent a nice note after the meeting: “Thank you for allowing us to discuss DNR’s forest management with you and your neighbors. We are always glad to answer questions and shed some light on our timber sale process. As we shared, there are a lot of factors involved from trust beneficiaries, harvest deliverables, and providing protections for biology, geology, and archaeology. We are grateful for the opportunity to have a conversation and discuss all the different aspects included in responsible forest management at DNR. Here is a link to our [Habitat Conservation Plan](#) if you want to take a deeper dive.”

OVERALL Questions:

> Where is DNR in the process for Bears U1&2 as you prep for auction?

Currently finishing up 2026 logging projects. This project is slated for 2027 and it will be auctioned in 2026. Planning to ready the units for auction will take place in 2025.

> What is the timetable for surveys, environmental impact studies, tribal notification, etc.?

Nothing specific at this time. In 2025 on-the-ground Field Work will begin with 4 Forresters, 1 Engineer, and a Project Manager to identify topography, wetlands, old growth trees, etc.

> How long will the winning logging company have to harvest the trees? Is there a deadline?

It's a 2 year lease of the land to harvest. After 2 years the harvest is done.

> What notifications do they give homeowners and McLane Creek visitors during this process? *Neighborhoods are not specifically notified, but public meetings can be attended by interested residents and public records can be requested.*

> Do you limit the number of “roads” a logging company can create during harvest?

No. But we can put a buffer on where roads/harvesting takes place. For this sale, logging companies will probably build roads along the ridgeline.

> Are there tribes, in addition to Squaxin, that are notified of the intention to harvest these units? Which tribes? *Any potential cultural resources discovered during field layout will be reviewed by DNR Cultural Resource Technician and/or Archaeologist. Pending this assessment, tribes identified using the Forest Practices Mapping Application Tool will be notified of potential resources.*

> When was this area last logged? *Unknown. Guessing that a piece of the range was logged 20 years ago based on appearance.*

> What is the approximate age of the trees? *Won't know until boots are on the ground.*

TREE SPECIFIC Questions:

> What constitutes a structurally complex tree? *A structurally complex tree is typically characterized by large epicormic branches, deep furrowed bark, open crown, broken top and limbs and are generally greater than 60” in diameter. This is outlined in DNR Policy PR 14-006-090 “Management of Forest Stand Cohorts”.*

> What constitutes a “leave tree”? How are they chosen? *A legacy tree that is representative of the original forest that inhabited the area in the 1900s or a tree that is more than 60” in circumference is considered for a leave tree. (NOTE: In DNR's Chapter 222-30 WAC Timber Harvesting, for each acre harvested three wildlife reserve trees, two green recruitment trees, and two down logs shall be left.)*

> Would you use a scattered or clumped approach for leave trees in this harvest?
Clumped

> What percentage of Capitol Forest is Legacy Forest? *DNR does not use the term Legacy Tree the same way the public does. A legacy tree is one that is representative of the original forest Pre-1944.*

> The Policy for Sustainable Forests (PSF) commits DNR to achieve a 10-15% target of “older forest” conditions. Is this target per unit? For instance Bears U1 must meet the 10-15% requirement as its own unit, and, so must Bears U2 as a separate unit? Are they considered 1 unit? Or, are all sites in the Capitol Forest considered 1 unit?

Answer unclear and we did not ask for clarification. The DNR recently conducted a landscape assessment titled “Landscape Assessment to Identify and Manage Structurally Complex Stands to Meet Older Forest Targets in Western Washington, May 7, 2024.” This was presented to the Board of Natural Resources at the July 2nd Meeting. A recording of this presentation and copy of this document can be found at <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/about/boards-and-councils/board-natural-resources>. This assessment was based on HCP planning unit, of which there are two in Capitol Forest, South Coast and South Puget, so this assessment is not broken down to the individual forest level.

> Is there a map that shows the 10-15% of legacy trees in each unit?

That information won't be available for these units until the survey. It's used for internal planning, which is not disseminated but will be discoverable through public records.

> What type of trees would be replanted? Currently the area has Douglas Fir and Maples. What is the growth rate of those trees? For instance in 10 years, a Douglas Fir would be about 12-15 feet tall.

Douglas Fir. DNR has a nursery.

(NOTE: a pamphlet was found online:

https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/frc_webster_plantingforestseedlings.pdf and types of seedlings grown by DNR:

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/forest-resources/webster-forest-nursery/plant-right-tree-seedlings>)

> What is the typical timeframe for planting trees? How do you ensure they are planted at the right time for maximum growth? What happens if they do not grow as expected?

Seedlings are planted by Workforce Prisoners from the nearby correctional facility. Growth is evaluated periodically.

AESTHETICS MANDATE Questions:

> How do you calculate ViewShed? Is that data/imagery available? If not, when would it be available? *Computer system calculates ViewShed. This will be run in 2025. (NOTE: Google Earth has a rough ViewShed function. Using 5 location points in the area, this is Google Earth's estimated ViewShed:*
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ms7TNNWqPLpVN2ENIZzoluiWBJ1MmZ7/view?usp=sharing>)

> Who determines how much logged timber refuse is left on the land after logging?

Logging companies have discretion to determine this. DNR Contract administrators will work with operators to ensure that slash is managed in a way that is suitable for planting. Pending review from foresters and DNR Fire staff, any conditions required for hazard abatement per WAC 332-24-650 will be adhered to.

FIDUCIARY MANDATE Questions:

> How many mbfs ((1,000 board feet)) does the DNR think the Bears U1 and U2 will generate.

7.8 mbfs

> What profits (\$ amount) is the DNR expecting from this sale?

\$3 million; does not take into account costs for readying the sale – engineering, environmental studies, etc. (NOTE: Trust beneficiaries, identified by the Center for Responsible Forestry, are 140.32 acres for State Forest Transfer and 41.8 acres for Common School funds.) Three million is a rough estimate, appraised value will be based on timber quality and quantity, current and expected market conditions, harvesting and road construction/maintenance costs.

> What percentage of revenue will this account for in the DNR's total fiscal plan?

The DNR's 2024 annual report has not been published. Note: WA Superintendent of Schools has said that logging only accounts for 1.6 percent of the budget. He believes that should be recoverable in other ways, through steady income streams instead of variable auction amounts.

<https://www.nwpb.org/2022/01/25/schools-only-receive-fractional-share-of-revenue-from-timber/>
DNR has a deliverable mandate based on MBF. The current annual deliverable mandate for Black Hills District (Capitol Forest) is 56136 MBF. With projected MBF total for bears of 7989, this accounts for approximately 14% of the District's annual cut. The revenue generated by individual timber sales is distributed to the applicable timber trust, in this case 01 State Forest Transfer (77%), and 03 Common School (23%). A percentage is taken for recovery of management costs.

It may be difficult to provide an exact percentage of how projected revenue fits into DNR's total fiscal plan, these numbers can help illustrate how Bears plays a role in making sure our volume deliverable is met at the district level.

> **After this sale, when would the area be put up for auction again? 60 years**

ENVIRONMENTAL MANDATE Questions:

> **Has the agency conducted a SEPA checklist for the area? What were the results? If not, when will this document be written?**

Impacts will be studied in 2025.

> **Part of the DNR's mission is to provide clean and abundant water. What studies have been conducted to verify that the current natural filtering of water through the treed hillside into McLane Creek won't be compromised after logging? The hill currently has its own ecosystem — creating its own mist, sequestering carbon, filtering rainfall to the creek, providing habitat to many birds, deer and other wildlife, etc.**

Impacts will be studied in 2025. LIDAR will be used for topography. (NOTE: Tree canopy cover is important for watersheds - <https://extension.psu.edu/the-role-of-trees-and-forests-in-healthy-watersheds>)

> **Are seasonal ponds/creeks considered critical areas in logging sites? What are the mitigation and buffers for those? Salmon bearing and non bearing?**

Seasonal ponds are considered wetlands. 100 ft. buffer from streams and wetlands.

(NOTE: Chapter 222-30 WAC Timber Harvesting - No timber shall be felled into or cable yarded across Type A or B Wetlands without written approval of the department.

Streams and wetlands are classified following forester field review. Buffers vary based on stream type and wetland size. See the Habitat Conservation Plan section D – Riparian Conservation Strategy for the Five West Side Planning Units. Areas not protected under HCP i.e Wetlands less than ¼ acre and Type 5 Streams, are prioritized as reserve tree locations. Link to DNR's HCP- Habitat Conservation on State Trust Lands | WA - DNR

AVENUES OTHER THAN AUCTION Questions:

> **What is a community trust? Can the land be converted from a logging area to a non-logging preserve/reserve?**

(Note: Recently the court ruled that the DNR can lease land for carbon capture instead of logging.

<https://conservationnw.org/news-updates/conservation-northwest-lauds-court-ruling-on-management-of-state-public-lands/>) Community forests are used to protect forestlands that are at risk of development. Local community partners will provide the local match for acquisition rights. Community forests are working forests with a management plan. Currently the area for Bears is not in danger of moving out of trust land and into potential development. This land is designated as General Ecological Management (GEM) Trust Land. Converting this land to a preserve would require replacement acres to keep the trust whole and to fulfill our fiduciary mandate to the state trusts. This land is not identified as a priority for conservation, this land will continue be managed for long term forestry. Suitable Carbon Capture units were evaluated based on “conservation value”, only those stands that classed as High Conservation Value were put forward in the initial carbon reserve project. None of the acreage in Capitol Forest was deemed to be of High Conservation Value for purposes of Carbon Capture at this time.

> **Can the state make it a state park to preserve the view from McLane Nature Trail/Pond?** Washington State Parks is a separate agency from DNR, transferring this land between agencies is not something being considered for this location. McLane Creek Nature Trail is also part of a forestry interpretive trail that explains how Capitol Forest is managed as a working forest. This harvest and the McLane Trail System demonstrate how a working forest can also be an area for outdoor recreation. Additionally, Trust land transfer tends to be for underperforming areas. Compensation to the trust must occur to change the designation from GEM land into another category, e.g. Rec area, NAP/NRCA, park.

> **Can citizens purchase or lease the land to avoid auction?**

Anyone can win the bid, but the logging lease is only good for 2 years. After that time, if log-able trees exist, the DNR could auction it off again.

RISK and NOISE Questions:

> **Logged lands are proven to be more fire prone. How does the DNR protect housing communities adjacent to logged lands?** *This sale area will be reviewed to see if it meets any of the requirements for hazard abatement as discussed in WAC 332-24-650, closest residence is approximately 700' away from proposal.*

> **Homes in this area are on a well system. How do you prevent well water from being contaminated during logging and after? What pesticides will be used on the area?**

Only pesticides that have been proven non-harmful to large wildlife is used. DNR does not monitor well water. (Note: Pesticide application has a 200 ft buffer zone from homes: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/forest-chemical-applications>)

> **What noise decibel can we expect during the logging process?**

Equivalent to construction noise. Logging typically ends by 3PM each day.

> **Will the area be used for motorbikes after logging?**

No information on use after logging.

> **Has the DNR ever created non-hunting areas for land near residential communities?**

Game management areas are managed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. This area is not open to motor vehicles at any time of the year.

OTHER Questions:

> **What is the process for determining which sites to log? Why did you pick this area?** *DNR land is harvested on rotation*

> **Why was the sale pushed back a year?** *This sale was moved to FY 27 as our volume deliverable as established by our Sustainable Harvest Calculation had been met for the original fiscal year of FY 2026.*

