



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands

### **DNR's vision statement for recreation and public access**

*“Manage public and trust lands in a manner that provides quality, safe recreational experiences that are sustainable and consistent with DNR's environmental, financial and social responsibilities.”*

# **Ahtanum State Forest Recreation Plan Will Guide DNR's Management**

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is beginning to plan for future recreation in the Ahtanum State Forest (ASF). The goal for this plan is to guide recreation management objectives in this working forest, located in southeast Washington. Information will also be gathered to assess dispersed recreation for future planning efforts in the Wenas Creek and Rattlesnake Creek areas, located north of the Ahtanum State Forest.

The Ahtanum State Forest is part of the legacy of more than five million acres of forest, aquatic, agricultural and urban lands managed by DNR for long-term benefits to current and future trust beneficiaries and the people of Washington.

## **Recreation in a Working Forest**

As a “working forest,” the Ahtanum State Forest is a place where people work and play outdoors, as planned harvesting and reforestation bring a stream of revenue to schools and other trusts, while supporting habitat for native plants and animals, as well as the current and future needs of public access and recreation.

The 76,000-acre Ahtanum State Forest is a block of forestland west of Yakima. Annually, thousands of visitors from across the state use these trails and facilities to enjoy activities such as ORV riding, four-wheel driving, hunting, horse riding, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing, hiking, and mountain biking.

Recreation opportunities in the Ahtanum State Forest include: five campgrounds, one sno-park, one major multiple-use trail, one day-use area, miles of designated ORV trails and green dot roads, groomed snowmobile routes, several dispersed camping areas and trails, and thousands of undeveloped acres.

## **The Planning Process**

The planning process is intended to guide how DNR manages recreation and public access on the trust lands in the Ahtanum State Forest. These trust lands have a pressing need for well-planned, sustainable recreation facilities that can be managed and maintained to DNR standards.

To achieve this, a goal of the planning process is to determine recreation management objectives for the future. Key decisions include which types of recreation will occur in what places, and what facilities are needed where.

### **Contact**

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This project builds on previous assessments, and will result in an agency-approved, prioritized implementation strategy. Topics to be addressed include: analysis of recreational needs, such as trail and camping needs, how best to provide for different types of recreational activities, how to provide for public safety, and how to ensure sustainable environmental resource protection.

## **Public Involvement Opportunities**

During the planning process, there will be many opportunities for citizens to be involved. Over the next several months, there will be meetings and workshops to discuss, review, and gather feedback on how best to manage recreation facilities and trails in this popular area. We will also be coordinating an Ahtanum State Forest Recreation Planning Committee. Representatives for user groups will be selected through an application process. User groups or volunteers can also help DNR inventory recreation areas within the Ahtanum State Forest. If you are interested in becoming involved, contact the DNR Southeast Region for an application.

A diversity of participation is very important to the planning process. Feedback from recreation visitors, neighbors, members of local government, DNR land managers and the general public will ensure successful implementation of the plan.

For the latest information about upcoming events related to the Ahtanum State Forest Recreation Plan, visit the Recreation section of our website at [www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov) or contact Eric Watrud at (509) 925-8510.