

BLANCHARD FOREST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

OPEN HOUSE MEETING

WELCOME !

Sponsored By: Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Wednesday, June 30th, 2004. 6:30 p.m. To 9:00 p.m.

Edison Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room Edison, WA

Website: www.dnr.wa.gov and click on Blanchard



BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting

Welcome !!

What is tonight's meeting about?

This meeting is about sharing information on the Blanchard Forest, informing the public about the planning process, and recording public comments as they relate to the **Blanchard Forest Management Strategies project**.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has begun a planning process to develop a set of **forest management strategies** for 4,827 acres of Forest Board Transfer lands located in northwestern Skagit County in an area commonly known as Blanchard Hill or Blanchard Mountain. .

I made it to the meeting, now what?

The meeting is informal and intended to create opportunities for the public and DNR to share information about the Forest Board trust lands on Blanchard Mountain; what DNR is calling ***Blanchard Forest - a working forest in an urban setting***.

We hope that you will visit the various meeting posts and talk with DNR staff, neighbors, and others that are in attendance. We also hope that you will offer your comments using the form attached to your meeting packet

DNR especially wants to hear from the public about what they consider to be important benefits that the Blanchard Forest provides.

What is the goal for this project?

DNR's goal in this effort is to develop a set of management strategies for Blanchard Forest, which recognizes the opportunity to meet multiple objectives and benefits from state-owned lands - - including environmental, amenity as well as financial benefits to trust beneficiaries. The management strategies will guide both short term and long term management consistent with DNR's Forest Resource Plan (1992), Habitat Conservation Plan (1997) and Forest Practices Rules (WAC 222).

DNR initially expects an outcome that includes a geographically specific set of management strategies with components for recreation, timber harvest and other revenue generating opportunities, wildlife habitat, watershed, and educational opportunities.

When will this project be completed?

The project is scheduled to be completed by late 2004 or early 2005.

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How do I get the most out of the meeting??

The meeting is divided into a number of 'posts' that you can visit. Each post has a different topic, or set of topics, about the Blanchard Forest. Each post is staffed by DNR who are there for you to talk to and share information, or record your comments.

Step 1: Start with the Greeting Post.

If you are reading this, you have already been to the Greeting Post and picked up your meeting packet. This post is located at the meeting entrance. Here you can pick up your meeting packet with information about the meeting and Blanchard Forest. **At the Greeting Post you have the option to sign-in as a participant and letting us know if you want to be on our mailing list for future meetings and comment opportunities.**

Step 2: Visit the various information posts.

There are 3 information posts. Participants are encouraged to visit the information posts as they desire to ask questions and share information with DNR staff. The posts are situated from the Greeting Post in the following order:

- **Forest Environment and Resource Protection**
- **Trust Management and Economic Impacts**
- **Public Access and Recreation**

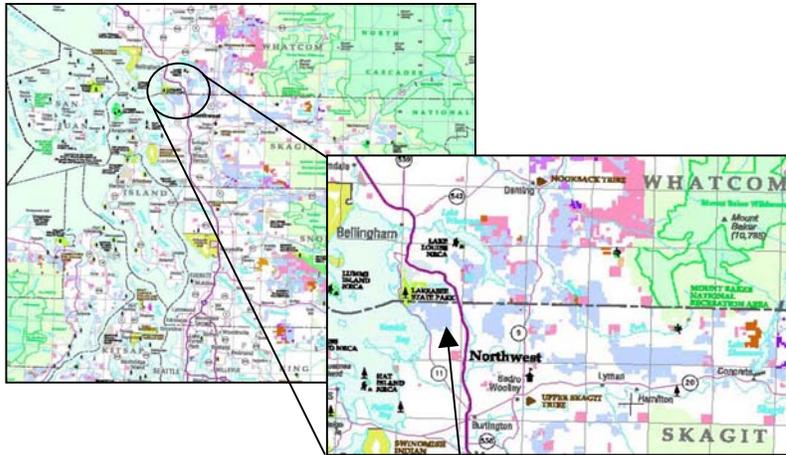
Step 3: Record your comments at the Comment Posts.

In order to make sure DNR is hearing you correctly, it has set up 'listening and commenting posts' where participants can record their comments. Your public comments can be recorded in a number of ways, including using the comment worksheet attached to your meeting packet and depositing your comments into a comment box, or ask a DNR staff person at one of the listening and commenting posts to record your comments. You can also send your written comments to us after the meeting by mailing them to: DNR, Northwest Region, Attn: Blanchard Forest Management Strategies, 919 N. Township St., Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284. All comments will be reviewed, considered, and retained in the public record as part of this project to develop a set of management strategies for Blanchard Forest.

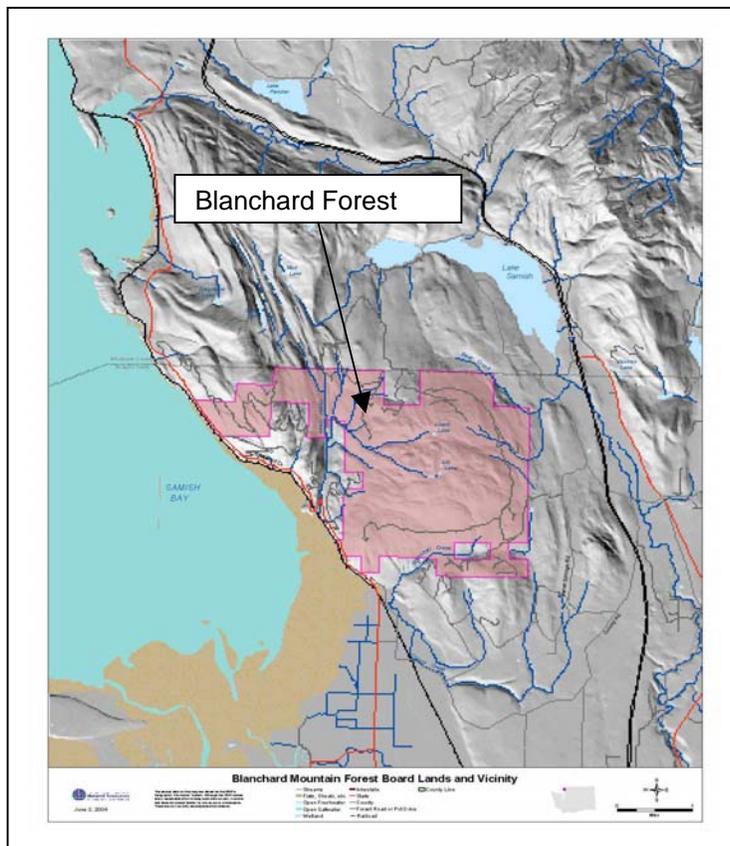
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Where is the Blanchard Forest located?

DNR manages 4,827 acres of Skagit County Forest Board lands on Blanchard Mountain. This area is located in northwestern Skagit County just south of the Whatcom County line. It is approximately 5 miles south of Bellingham and 10-12 miles northwest of Burlington and Mount Vernon. Blanchard Mountain is 1.5 miles from Interstate 5 on its eastern edge, and the Chuckanut Drive Scenic Roadway borders its western edge. Larrabee State Park lies to the north of the site, but is not directly connected by trails or road.



Blanchard Forest



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DNR's Management Objectives For Blanchard Forest

DNR's management objectives, as trust manager for Blanchard, are guided by the department's Forest Resource Plan (FRP), which was adopted in 1992 by the Board of Natural Resources. (The FRP is currently going through an update process.) The FRP establishes policies that guide the management of all state-owned trust lands.

The department is also required to comply with numerous statutes, including the Omnibus Enabling Act of 1889, Multiple Use Act, Forest Practices Act, Shorelines Management Act, State Environmental Policy Act, and the federal Endangered Species Act. DNR's forest management activities in Western Washington are also guided by a Habitat Conservation Plan which was agreed upon with the federal services in 1997.

While state law has made clear DNR's trust responsibilities, the law has also recognized the need for DNR to manage the lands prudently by balancing the competing public interests on state lands. This need for balance requires DNR to manage trust lands, such as Blanchard, in creative ways that include generation of trust revenues, while providing for collateral benefits such as recreation qualities that the public values.

Management Objectives

Management of Blanchard forestlands will....

- Generate revenue and other benefits for trust beneficiaries.
- 1. Objective: Implement timber harvest levels that contribute to and are consistent with sustainable yields established by the Board of Natural Resources
- 2. Objective: Consider other revenue generating mechanisms that are consistent with state forestland management.
- Sustain a healthy and productive forest.
- 1. Objective: Implement forest management activities that will maintain the health and viability of forest resources such as timber, soil, water and wildlife.
- 2. Objective: Protect and restore riparian and wetland habitat to sustain healthy native aquatic, wetland and riparian ecosystems.
- Provide for the safety and enhance the quality of life of neighbors and visitors.
- 1. Objective: Allow and manage for dispersed, low impact non-motorized recreation.
- 2. Objective: Develop and maintain an access network of roads and trails that facilitates and is compatible with commercial forest management activities while providing public access.
- 3. Objective: Reduce the visual impact of forest management activities in high visibility areas.
- 4. Objective: Support stewardship education opportunities and partnerships that address community needs.
- 5. Objective: Ensure no significant risk to public health, safety and resources from forest management related mass-wasting events.
- 6. Objective: Identify, and protect where appropriate, significant historic, archaeological and cultural resources.

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THE BLANCHARD FOREST IS A "TRUST" FOREST.

Blanchard Forest is trust land owned by the state and managed to generate revenue in perpetuity for the trust beneficiaries.

The management of trust lands is one of the statutory and constitutional roles of DNR. A fiduciary duty (to hold in trust for another) of DNR as a trust manager is to generate revenue for the beneficiaries, consistent with the DNR's Forest Resource Plan (1992), Habitat Conservation Plan (1997) and Forest Practices Rules (WAC 222).

Blanchard is officially classified as a state 'Forest Board Transfer' property and is part of Forest Board trust. Revenues from Forest Board trust lands help support county services through the local junior taxing districts. The largest beneficiaries of revenue distributed from Blanchard Forest are the Burlington-Edison School District, Skagit County, and the state general fund.

DNR became managers of Blanchard Forest in 1957.

The Blanchard forest became trust land when the county transferred ownership of the land to the state after it had reverted to the county in the 1930's when private landowners failed to pay property taxes. DNR became managers of the Blanchard forest in 1957 when DNR was created as a state agency and assigned the duty as trust manager under state law.

DNR must act in the best interest of the trust beneficiaries using good judgment and common sense.

DNR's management of the Blanchard forest is governed by a combination of state statute, judicial case law, and departmental policy. The State's role, and that of DNR's role as trust manager, is to seek full value for trust assets, giving equal interest to both current and future trust beneficiaries, managing with sound judgment and generally acting with undivided loyalty to the beneficiaries of the trust. For the Blanchard forest, the trust beneficiaries include Skagit County, Burlington-Edison School District, United General Hospital, Port of Skagit County, a local cemetery district and the state general fund.

DNR has also been directed by the Washington State Legislature to manage trust lands in consideration of other statutes relating to multiple use and sustained yield.

Multiple use. The 1974 Legislature directed DNR to use the concept of multiple use management where it is in the best interests of the state and the general welfare of the citizens, is consistent with the trust provisions of the lands involved, and is compatible with activities necessary to fulfill the financial obligations of trust management.

Multiple uses may include recreation, educational or scientific use, maintenance of rights of way, greenbelts, scenic and historic areas, and watershed protection. Educational or scientific use includes such use by students of educational institutions which are also designated beneficiaries of specific trust lands. These uses will be allowed to the extent they are compatible with trust obligations.

MANAGING FOR MULTIPLE BENEFITS

BLANCHARD FOREST HAS MANY BENEFITS AND COMPETING INTERESTS

The benefits that the Blanchard forest provides can be grouped into three general categories:



Economic benefits are those benefits that can generate revenue for the trust beneficiaries. Historically for Blanchard seven million dollars of trust revenue has been generated from the sale of timber. Today, the sale of timber remains the best income producing activity for the trust.

Social benefits include recreational uses such as hiking, horseback riding, hangliding and sightseeing and education.

As an educational benefit, Blanchard Forest's distinctive attributes make it a good area for DNR to demonstrate how to manage in a way that sustains both trust revenue, recreational and other benefits.

Other important social aspects also include public opinion on how DNR manages the land for both timber revenue, and for non-monetary benefits such as aesthetics, as well as preservation.

Additionally, social benefits include the direct and indirect benefits to society that the sale of state timber has, such as reducing the need for other revenue sources to provide public services, and the social benefits that come with jobs created from the sale of timber such as logging, milling, and transportation.

Environmental benefits include those benefits that are provided by a forested landscape. For DNR, this means managing the forest for a diversity of wildlife habitat as part of a well managed working forest. It also includes protecting areas of the forest that are occupied by threatened or endangered species, such as the Bald Eagle, Marbled Murrelet, and Townsend's bat.

In reality all of these benefits must be considered together when making management decisions about Blanchard Forest, and other trust lands. Any management decision for Blanchard Forest must be made within the context of fulfilling the fiduciary obligations to the trust beneficiaries.

Managing In An Environment Of Competing Interests

(Reference Source: DNR Forest Resource Plan, Appendix B, Discussion of Trust Mandate, 1992)

The DNR, as trust manager, often finds itself between many competing interests. Some interests claim that any action the department has taken beyond complying with the minimum legal requirements violates a trust duty to maximize revenue for trust beneficiaries. Other interests believe the DNR, as managers of state forest lands, has a higher "duty" than maximizing revenue and should be held to a different standard of stewardship. Neither of these perspectives reflects a complete picture of the department's duties and practices.

As with all trust land that DNR manages, it must act in the best interest of the trust just as any prudent person would when dealing with his or her own property. In the department's view, this means, among other things, avoiding undue risk, avoiding tortious acts, and other factors that would jeopardize the ability of the trust to generate maximum revenue over time.

In the DNR's opinion, public concerns regarding wildlife, fisheries and water quality are likely to escalate and may result in more stringent regulations if the public perceives that the department and other public land managers are not considering non-timber resources.

DNR believes that the common law requirement of undivided loyalty to trust beneficiaries is fundamental. This principle requires that trust land and its assets not be diverted to benefit others at the expense of the trust beneficiaries without compensation. However, DNR can provide others with collateral benefits as long as DNR manages with the beneficiaries' interest first and foremost in mind.

For example, the timing, sequence, harvest unit size and geographic distribution of timber sales on Blanchard may be modified to benefit wildlife, water quality or fisheries without violating the principle of undivided loyalty.

Short term versus long-term income for the trust. As trust manager, DNR is required to make the trust productive in terms of generating revenue without unduly favoring present beneficiaries over future beneficiaries. DNR has been criticized in the past on the timing of income to the trust, not the actual amount.

The trusts include the entire forest ecosystem and are perpetual. The department, as trustee, must therefore manage the trusts to ensure equal treatment for all generations. Setting a rotation age for timber at 40 or 50 years, for example, would prefer the present generation over the future. It would result in high harvest levels in early years and much lower levels in future years. On the other hand, setting the rotation age at 100 years or more would severely reduce harvest levels for the first few decades, and depending on the age selected, either reduce the total harvest at all times, or else result in a higher level of harvest in 80 years.

The department does not know all the ways there are to generate income from state forest lands. The department believes it is prudent to manage these trust assets so that at least reasonably foreseeable future sources of income are not foregone by actions taken today.

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RECENT HISTORY OF BLANCHARD FOREST (IN BRIEF)

- 1885: Town of Blanchard established.
- 1880s: Extensive logging at the base and lower southern slopes of Blanchard Mountain.
- 1886 to 1910: Logging companies began operating and acquiring land on Blanchard Mountain. Beginning of extensive logging of Blanchard Mountain's original forest.
- 1925: A major forest fire sweeps over Blanchard Mountain burning most of the remaining scattered old growth (except for a few pockets such as near the rock cliffs at Oyster Dome and west side of Oyster Creek).
- 1930s: Chuckanut Drive is completed.
- 1930s: Landowners abandoned land now known as Blanchard Forest and defaulted on taxes owed to Skagit County
- 1930s: County transferred ownership to state, hence the trust name: "Forest Board Transfer" land.
- 1957: DNR becomes managers of Forest Board Transfer lands in the state, including those lands on Blanchard
- 1985 to 2002: DNR sells 10 timber sales generating a total sale value of \$6,885,530.00. The total harvest area for all 10 timber sales is 957 acres.
- 1987: (Approximate date.) Hanggliders begin using a site of a completed timber sale as a launch area.
- 1999: Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) study concludes that Blanchard does not meet the necessary criteria to qualify as an NRCA or as a Natural Area Preserve (NAP).
- 1997: DNR enters into a multi-species HCP agreement with federal services to protect wildlife habitat on 1.6 million acres of forest land in Western Washington.
- 2001: Legislature appropriates \$25,000 to be matched by \$25,000 in private funding for a study of social, ecological and financial values on the Blanchard Forest. For the duration of the study (no later than June 30, 2002), the Legislature requires the DNR to "defer al conifer clear-cut timber sales within the study area." DNR and Northwest Ecosystem Alliance (NWEA) formed a steering committee to hire a consultant to conduct joint study of social, ecological and financial values.
- 2002: The Cedar River Group, consultant, completes the study entitled "Evaluation of Blanchard Mountain Social, Ecological and Financial Values". (Copy can be viewed on DNR's website.)
- 2002 to 2004: DNR sells two more timber sales: (named Pecan and Shenandoah) for a total timber sale value anticipated to be \$631,388.00. Total acreage for both timber sales is 173 acres.
- 2003: DNR initiates sustainable harvest calculation project for state forest lands in Western Washington.
- 2004: DNR initiates planning process to develop a set of management strategies for Blanchard
- 2004: June 30th, DNR conducts first public meeting open house at Edison Elementary School, Edison, WA.



**BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting
Forest and Resource Protection Post**

Blanchard Forest, managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, comprises 4,827 acres of predominately Douglas-fir-dominated stands. DNR manages Blanchard for multiple uses, striving to balance active forest management with recreation and protection of riparian ecosystems, slope stability, hydrologic function, and wildlife habitat. This represents the information that we have to date, however it is subject to change as new data becomes available.

DOMINANT SPECIES¹ IN BLANCHARD FOREST

Dominant Species	% Acres
Douglas-fir	95
Red Alder	4
Western Hemlock	.1

Other tree species present in Blanchard Forest include Western Red Cedar, Sitka Spruce, Western White Pine, Grand Fir, Black Cottonwood, Pacific Madrone, Aspen, and Big-leaf Maple. Common understory species include Swordfern, Salal, Salmonberry, Elderberry, Oregon Grape, Huckleberry.

AGE CLASS DISTRIBUTION IN BLANCHARD FOREST

Ageclass	%	Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Stand Developmental Age
0-9	3	Open
10-19	18	Regeneration
20-29	6	Pole
30-39	4	Pole
40-49	3	Closed
50-59	12	Closed
60-69	38	Closed
70-79	10	Complex
80-89	3	Complex
90-99	1	Complex
100-119	1	Complex
120-399	1	Complex + Fully Functional
N/A	1	Nonforested
	100	TOTAL ACRES

CURRENTLY BEING HARVESTED

Timber Sale Name	Shenandoah
Acres (Partial Cut)	80
Acres (Shelterwood)	40
Total Volume	1,772 MBF*
Selling Price	\$335,388

FUTURE HARVESTS

Timber Sale Name	Westview	Timber Sale Name	Green Drake
Acres (Partial Cut)	175	Acres (Par. Cut/Regen. Harvest)	240
Est. Total Volume	700 MBF*	Est. Total Volume	4,400 MBF*
Selling Price	Not Sold	Selling Price	Not sold
Planned Sale Date	June 13, 2005	Planned Sale Date	August 2005

VERAGE ANNUAL VOLUME TARGET: 5.1 MMBF

¹ Dominant species are species with the greatest basal area within an inventory unit, using DNR's FRIS data.

* MBF = 1,000 Board Feet

BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting
Working Forests Can Protect Riparian Ecosystems, Slope Stability and Hydrologic Function

Riparian Conservation Strategy

DNR's Riparian Strategy represents one component of its Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Riparian Strategy consists of protection for *riparian ecosystems, wetlands, unstable hill slopes*, as well as maintenance of *hydrologic maturity in higher elevation drainage basins* to provide high quality fish habitat.

A riparian ecosystem is the area of direct interaction between terrestrial and aquatic environments, usually adjacent to stream channels, lakes or wetlands. Through the HCP, DNR provides important components for freshwater life stages of fish, such as moderate stream flows, cool, well-oxygenated, unpolluted water, and structural diversity provided by submerged large woody debris in the fish bearing waters on DNR-managed lands.

Fish species in streams flowing from Blanchard Forest may include: Sockeye, Chum, Chinook, and Coho salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat trout.

Riparian Ecosystem Protection

While planning harvesting activities, DNR delineates riparian management zones to protect riparian ecosystems. *Riparian management zones* consist of a riparian buffer and, where appropriate, a wind buffer on the windward side of the stream. A *buffer* is a forested strip left during timber harvest to conserve riparian ecosystems and wildlife habitat. Riparian buffer widths vary from 100' to more than 150' according to the stream type or wetland type. Management activities such as thinning or partial cutting may be allowed within the buffer as long as they are consistent with the conservation objectives for the buffer.

In Blanchard Forest, 22 miles of stream channels (including both fish-bearing and non-fish bearing) have been identified.

Wetland Protection

A *wetland* is an area that is inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, such as swamps, bogs, fens, and similar areas. To protect wetlands during timber harvesting activities, the DNR delineates buffers in accordance with its HCP. As with riparian buffers, wetland buffers vary in size. However, wetlands larger than .25 acres receive at least a 100-foot buffer.

4.6 acres of lakes and 10.5 acres of wetlands have been identified in Blanchard Forest.

Slope Stability Protection

A DNR slope stability specialist evaluates potentially unstable slopes in areas where harvesting or roads are planned. All activities will comply with Forest Practices rules. Unstable areas are avoided where there is a potential to deliver material to public resources or threaten public safety.

Hydrologic Maturity in Rain on Snow Zone

In drainage basins where DNR manages a majority of the land and the basin has more than 1/3 of its area in the significant ROS zone, DNR maintains 2/3 of its conifer stands in age classes older than 25 yrs., in accordance with its HCP. None of the basins in Blanchard Forest fulfill these criteria; therefore DNR does not manage these basins for hydrologic maturity.

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Working Forests Can Protect Habitat for Marbled Murrelets and Eagles

Marbled Murrelet Habitat Interim Conservation Strategy

Another component of the HCP, DNR's Interim Conservation Strategy for the Marbled Murrelet includes the following steps:

1. Identify and defer from harvest any part of a suitable habitat block. A suitable habitat block is a forest stand at least 5 acres in size, within 50 miles of marine waters, and containing an average of 2 platforms per acre. Platforms are defined as any large limb or other structure at least 7 inches in diameter, at least 50 feet above ground in the live crown of a conifer tree.
2. Conduct a habitat relationship study in each west-side planning unit to determine the relative importance, based on murrelet occupancy, of the various habitat types within that particular planning unit.
3. Marginal habitat that would be expected to contain a maximum of 5 % of the occupied sites would be released for harvest. However, no known occupied sites will be released; they will all be protected.
4. Inventory surveys of all higher quality habitat will take place. Surveyed, unoccupied habitat will be released for harvest **if** it is not within 0.5 miles of an occupied site **and**, after harvest, at least 50 % of the suitable habitat on DNR lands will remain in the WAU. *The DNR has completed steps 1-3 and is currently working on step 4.*

In Blanchard Forest, one survey area has been classified as having occupied status for marbled murrelets.

Bald Eagle Habitat Conservation

Conservation of bald eagles and their habitat is currently achieved by DNR policies that mandate general protection for riparian areas and upland wildlife habitat, specific commitments to state and federal requirements for protection of threatened and endangered species, and compliance with Forest Practices Rules and state wildlife regulations to protect nest and communal roost sites. Site management plans for bald eagle habitat consider perch/pilot trees and foraging areas associated with nesting sites, winter roost trees, and winter feeding concentration areas, in addition to protection of nesting trees and the immediate vicinity.

One eagle management area is located in the southwest corner of Blanchard Forest.

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Working Forests Can Protect Uncommon Habitats

Unique Habitat Protection Strategy

The conservation strategies for fish, marbled murrelets, and bald eagles also protect habitat for many unlisted species. Through the HCP, DNR offers additional protection for species that rely on uncommon habitats, such as talus, caves, cliffs, balds, snags, structurally unique trees, and mineral springs by protecting those habitats when planning harvesting activities.

Talus

Talus is a homogenous area of rock rubble ranging in size from 1 inch to 6.5 feet that usually develops at the base of cliffs or steep hill slopes. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has designated talus as a “priority habitat”. DNR avoids harvesting on unforested talus fields greater than 1 acre, as well as constructing road through and mining rock from talus fields. Buffers may be applied in some cases, but width varies depending on the canopy closure and size of the talus fields.

Associated Wildlife Species: Reptiles, several bat species, pikas, other small mammals.

Talus is located throughout Blanchard Forest, most notably at the base of the Oyster Dome.

Caves

A cave is a naturally occurring cavity, recess, void, or system of interconnected passages that occurs under the earth in soils, rocks, ice, or other geological formations, and is large enough to contain a human. A biologist will evaluate all caves identified in Blanchard Forest and protection measures will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Human disturbance may be minimized in caves where sensitive species are found.

Associated Wildlife Species: Townsend’s big-eared bat, various Myotis species, amphibians, mammals.

There are numerous caves across the Blanchard forest, including several areas where bats have been found, and at least two sites where experts have recorded use by Townsend’s big-eared bats.

Cliffs

A cliff is a steep, vertical or over-hanging rock face; those greater than 25 feet tall and below 5,000 feet in elevation are considered a “priority habitat” by WDFW. During planning for harvest activities around cliffs, DNR evaluates the cliff to determine if wildlife use is likely, and if so provides protection measures. These measures may include preventing logs from disturbing the cliff face during felling and yarding, retaining trees on cliff benches along the base and at the top of cliffs judged suitable for nesting raptors, and avoidance of damage to significant cavities, fissures and ledges. Cliffs in excess of 150 feet in height will be evaluated for peregrine falcon use and will be protected according to Forest Practice regulations.

Associated Wildlife Species: Birds, small mammals, several bat species, peregrine falcon.

Numerous cliffs are located throughout Blanchard Forest.

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Working Forests Can Protect Uncommon Habitats

Balds

A bald is a small area occupied by a perpetually unforested plant community surrounded by forest. DNR avoids constructing roads through balds.

Associated Wildlife Species: Butterflies, mammals, reptiles, amphibians.

Small areas of balds are located in Blanchard Forest, primarily at the tops of cliff areas.

Snags

Snags are an essential component of wildlife habitat. They provide a supportive substrate for nesting, feeding, and cover. WDFW defines snags as dead or partially dead trees at least 10 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) and at least 6.5 feet tall. Under its HCP, DNR addresses snags that are at least 15" dbh and 30' tall, giving preference to those that are at least 20" dbh and 40' tall.

Associated Wildlife Species: Pileated woodpeckers, other woodpeckers and cavity-nesting birds, forest raptors, Vaux's swifts, numerous other bird species, numerous small mammals, various bat species.

Few snags are located in Blanchard Forest due to historic logging in early 1900s followed by a major forest fire in 1925. Those that remain are scattered throughout the forest.

Large Structurally Unique Trees

Structurally unique trees are very large trees with large strong limbs, open crowns, large hollow trunks, broken tops or limbs, multiple leaders, and mistletoe brooms.

Associated Wildlife Species: Raptors, including spotted owls and bald eagles, numerous bird species, including marbled murrelets, numerous small mammals, various bat species.

A 300-year-old (approx.) forest stand, estimated to be 48 acres in size, is located in the northwestern portion of Blanchard Forest. Additional structurally unique trees are primarily located in the immediate vicinity of this area.

Mineral Springs

Mineral springs provide important resources for certain animal species, for example, the band-tailed pigeon. To prevent or reduce adverse impacts to this landscape feature and the wildlife species associated with it, DNR cooperates with US Fish and Wildlife Service in planning management activities within 200 feet of known mineral springs.

No mineral springs have been identified, but there is potential for them to occur. These springs are only occasional identified during sale layout.

BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting

Trust Management and Economic Impacts Information Post

History

All Blanchard Forestlands managed by the Department of Natural Resources are managed for the benefit of Skagit County and the state general fund. In the past, these lands were privately owned, but most were logged and abandoned in the 1920's and 1930's, and reverted to Skagit County ownership due to non-payment of taxes. Washington State established the State Forest Board for management of foreclosed and cut over forestland and Skagit County deeded these lands to the state to be managed in trust forever as forestland. The state gave responsibility for management of these lands to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Trust Management Responsibilities

The primary purposes for management of these Skagit County Forest Board Trust lands are 1) accomplish reforestation of cut over lands, 2) develop and maintain state forests in perpetuity and 3) provide revenue to the county and state from management activities. In addition, these lands also provide a diversity of wildlife habitat, clean water and many kinds of recreation opportunities.

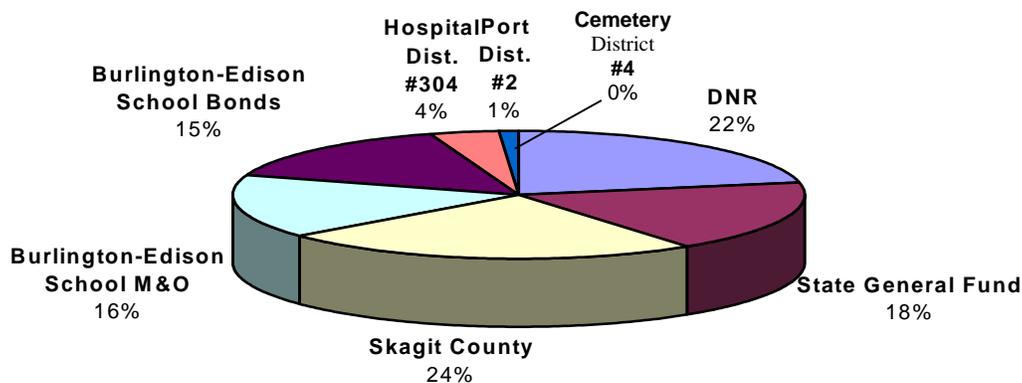
As the trust manager for these lands, DNR is responsible to:

- act prudently - avoid exposing the trust assets to undue risk
- undivided loyalty – manage for the interests of the beneficiaries and not others
- intergenerational equity – avoid favoring one generation at the expense of others
- avoid foreclosing future options – maintain diverse assets and management options

Revenue Generation and Distribution

Revenue from the sale of timber provides income for public services in Skagit County and the state. Local services that are supported include maintenance and improvement of county roads, construction and remodeling of Burlington –Edison schools, public school education, United General Hospital, the Port of Skagit County, emergency medical services, Skagit County Conservation Futures program and Cemetery District #4.

Revenue generated in the past 12 years (1991-2003) totals \$6,478,733. Of this total, \$4,925,428 was distributed to Skagit County, in the same manner as local property taxes, for support of government services and \$1,553,306 was retained by DNR to fund ongoing management. The pie chart below shows revenue distribution for 1992. The percentage distributed to individual local taxing districts varies slightly each year.



Note: Cemetery District #4 receives a small amount (<1%) of revenue.

BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting.

Evaluation of Blanchard Mountain Social, Ecological and Financial Values

In 2001 the state legislature asked DNR and Northwest Ecosystem Alliance (and Sierra Club) to collaborate on a jointly funded study of the social, ecological, and financial values of Blanchard Mountain. The main focus was on using the latest economic techniques to estimate the values local residents place on both amenity uses and economic uses of Blanchard Mountain, as well as the actual local economic contribution made by recreational uses and timber harvest at Blanchard Mountain.

DNR and Northwest Ecosystem Alliance formed a steering committee, including Bonnie Bunning and Lisa McShane as well as Bob Rose (Skagitonians to Preserve Farmlands) and hired Cedar River Group as consultant. All parties found the collaborative exercise productive and valuable.

The study took from February through August 2002. It used a telephone survey of 200 Whatcom and Skagit County residents, an input-output analysis of economic benefits, an on-site survey of recreational uses of Blanchard Mountain, and a description of Blanchard Mountain's attributes and recent and projected timber harvesting activities.

The study concluded the following:

- The general public places a greater overall value on amenity uses of Blanchard Mountain, like recreation, than on economic uses like timber harvest.
- The Skagit and Whatcom County general public's total willingness to make a hypothetical one-time payment to permanently stop all timber harvest for the sake of recreational, economic and ecological values on Blanchard Mountain was about \$8.5 million.
- The actual economic contribution of timber harvest on Blanchard Mountain to the Skagit and Whatcom Counties' economy each year is estimated to range from \$1.6 to \$3.1 million, and total annual tax revenue is estimated to range from \$68,000 to \$138,000.
- The actual economic contribution of recreation on Blanchard Mountain to Skagit and Whatcom Counties each year is estimated to range from \$0.3 to \$0.5 million, and total annual tax revenue is estimated to range from \$49,000 to \$83,000.

The study did not examine or make conclusions about the degree of mutual compatibility of varying levels of recreational use and timber harvest. However, other surveys have shown that the public expects forest managers to figure out how to manage for both timber harvest and recreation and wildlife values.

The study provides a good point of departure for DNR to work collaboratively with NWEA and others to develop management strategies within current law to accommodate acceptable levels of both timber harvest and recreational use, while also protecting wildlife, scenic views, slope stability, and other natural values of the area.

BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting.

Public Access and Recreation Post

Blanchard Forest is a popular area for a wide variety of non-motorized recreational activities. The mountain's trail system is used year-round due to low elevation and minimal snow accumulation. Outstanding vistas of the San Juan Islands, Puget Sound, and Canadian Cascades can be seen from the trails and Samish Overlook. The majority of visitors come from the Bellingham area, Mount Vernon, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C.

Visitation: 35,000 to 50,000 visitors days per year

Season of Use: Year-round, peaking in summer months

Public Access and Recreation Opportunities:

- Hiking/backpacking
- Horseback riding
- Mountain bicycling
- Hang gliding
- Paragliding
- Bird watching
- Picnicking
- Scenic driving

Existing Facilities:

- Trails
 - Non-motorized, multiple-use trail system consisting of 17 miles of trail; 5 miles are maintained by the DNR. The remaining trail mileage has been built and maintained by users.
- Campgrounds
 - Lizard Lake, primitive backcountry campground, provides 3 camp sites
 - Lilly Lake, primitive backcountry campground, provides 6 camp sites
- Day-use area
 - Samish Overlook (undeveloped, receives a high level of use)
- Trailheads
 - Lower; provides parking for 10-15 vehicles with trailers, preferred by horseback riders
 - Upper; provides parking for 10-20 vehicles, preferred by hikers and mountain bicyclists
- Pacific Northwest Trail
 - 1200 mile trail stretches from Cape Alava on the Pacific Ocean to Glacier National Park (and the Continental Divide)
 - Crosses the Blanchard Forest Block utilizing DNR and user built trails

BLANCHARD FOREST - - Benefits of a Working Forest in an Urban Setting.

Issues and Concerns:

- Off-Road Vehicle use on roadways and trespass on trail system
- Recreational target shooting
 - In congested areas
 - Over and/or along trails and roads
 - In vicinity of nearby homes
- Lack of permanent sanitation facilities
- Night time parties and illegal fires
- Illegal dumping
- Vandalism and damage to trust resources

Future Plans:

- Lower Trailhead Improvements
 - Parking lot delineation (summer 2004)
 - New signage (summer/fall 2004)
 - Permanent sanitation facility installation (summer/fall 2004)
- Samish Overlook Improvements
 - Parking area delineation and surface repair (summer 2004)
 - Planning, acquisition and development of day-use area (begin process 2004 - 2005)
 - Night time restrictions on use (begin summer 2004)
- Trail system expansion
 - Lost Lizard Trail (begin planning process 2004 - 2005)
 - Trail would link the DNR and Larrabee State Park trail systems
- Potential development of a Public Access and Recreation Management Plan for the Forest Block

The DNR would use the results of this management strategies process for Blanchard Forest as guidance for development of the recreation management plan.