



NEWS RELEASE

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DNR-Managed Forests "Green" Certified **First western state to obtain forest certification for trust lands**

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has obtained "green" certification, recognizing the agency's balanced stewardship of Western Washington's state trust lands, Public Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland announced today.

DNR has enrolled in the American Forest and Paper Association's Sustainable Forestry Initiative program. About 100 million acres of forestland are third-party certified under the SFI standard, making it the dominant certification standard in US and North America.

"Certification under SFI recognizes that DNR's management of Washington State's forested trust lands is sustainable and environmentally sound," said Sutherland. "The SFI program will not impose a new set of land management requirements on state trust lands—for DNR that continues to be guided by state and federal law and our federally-approved Habitat Conservation Plan. Instead, SFI certification acknowledges the outstanding practices we're already using in forest management, consistent with the SFI standard," he said.

"Also, SFI is broadly accepted by most retailers as an indicator of sustainable forest management," said Sutherland. "Certification helps ensure a broad range of markets for forest products from state trust lands."

Sutherland concluded, "DNR employees can take pride in SFI certification, because of what it emphasizes--continuous management improvement, a strong role for science, objective management standards, and sustainability, as well as recognizing high standards for protecting water, air, soil, fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and public/employee health and safety. All of these are core values for DNR."

Beneficiaries of Washington State's trust lands applaud DNR's forest certification

DNR's forest certification drew accolades from higher education, K-12, and counties who benefit from revenue produced on state trust forestlands.

Bruce Bare, Dean of the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources, and a voting member of the Board of Natural Resources, commented, "As Dean of the College of Forest Resources at the University of Washington, I'm personally committed to using certification as a public indication of sustainable management. SFI certification of these trust lands is significant because of the strict standard of loyalty the trust manager must show to the interests of the trust beneficiaries – including Washington's schools and universities. Certification illustrates that sustainability and trust management are compatible, and in fact are mutually supportive."

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Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson, who also serves as a voting member of the Board, provided a statement regarding state forestland certification. "I am very pleased by today's announcement that the state has gained SFI certification for our state's trust lands," she said. "It is a clear signal to the trust beneficiaries, which include the K-12 public schools, of the exemplary manner in which these lands are managed."

Bergeson added, "One of my guiding principles as a board member is that sustainability and trust loyalty are compatible concepts, and this award proves that we have achieved this goal, not just in policy, but also in practice." She continued, "All citizens of our state can be very proud of this award for demonstrating our on-going sustainable management of our natural resources."

Counties who benefit from forest trust land revenue lauded the announcement.

Bill Vogler, Executive Director of the Washington State Association of Counties, said, "WSAC's timber counties see this certification as further support for the sustainable, environmentally sensitive, economically viable, and balanced land management approach we take in Washington."

King County Council member Jane Hague, said, "Congratulations to Lands Commissioner Sutherland and the State Department of Natural Resources for your leadership. This certification assures consumers and the general public that forested trust lands in Western Washington are managed sustainably and with environmental sensitivity. Your agency has set an example for other Western states to follow."

Independent auditor commends DNR's forest management practices

DNR's acceptance into the SFI® program came after a favorable independent audit and review of the forestland management practices on state trust ownership in Western Washington. Bureau Veritas Quality International of North America (BVQi), a licensed audit firm headquartered in New York, performed the audit in September of 2004. BVQi is independent from the SFI organization and from DNR. As auditor, their role was to independently evaluate DNR's practices against the SFI Standard, and to report their findings.

According to Randy Daugharthy, President of BVQi North America, the firm sent three teams composed of a certified lead auditor and a technical specialist such as an ecologist, wildlife biologist, or watershed specialist to personally visit 125 sites over two weeks of fieldwork. The sites represented all aspects of DNR's forest management and were randomly selected or visited spontaneously.

Daugharthy noted that the audit findings commended DNR for the agency's forest management practices. "The audit commended DNR for environmentally-sensitive management of forest roads and timber harvest near streams as well as the close working relationship between DNR foresters and wildlife biologists," he said.

The audit also suggested opportunities to improve information flow within the agency and recommended training efforts for loggers whose employers purchase DNR timber.

Lands Commissioner Sutherland reported that the auditor's suggestions have already been implemented.

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SFI standard both comprehensive and rigorous

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative standard addresses reforestation, water quality protection, wildlife conservation, visual quality, biological diversity, and effective use of forest resources. It also includes guidance for sustained yield, clearcutting, reforestation, road building, wildlife habitat, biodiversity protection, chemical use, employee training, and many other topics.

“We welcome DNR's enrollment in the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program,” said Bill Banzhaf, President of the Sustainable Forestry Board. “The SFI program is based on the integration of responsible environmental practices and sound business practices to the benefit of landowners, customers, and the people they serve. DNR is a perfect example of this approach.”

Strong market demand for “Green” certified wood

Virtually all of the U.S. paper and wood products retailers and home builders who have adopted written policies favoring wood supplies from sustainably managed forests have “inclusive” policies accepting SFI as an indicator of sustainable forest management. Examples include Lowes, Home Depot, Staples, Office Depot, Kinkos, Xerox, AOL/Time Warner, Lanoga (Lumbermans), Centex Homes, and many others.

Paul Hylbert, President and CEO of Lanoga said, “We at Lanoga are very pleased to see the SFI Certification of the forestry practices for the State Lands in Washington.”

Hylbert continued, “Through certification, we are assured that our State’s forest resources will be managed for the benefit of the various stakeholders for their short and long-term benefits. As lumber is among the most environmentally friendly of all building products, it is highly appropriate that Doug Sutherland and the Department of Natural Resources have taken this important step.”

DNR – trust land manager

DNR manages about 3 million acres of state-owned forest, agricultural lands and commercial properties for long-term benefits to current and future trust beneficiaries and other residents of the state. Since 1970, management of trust lands has produced more than \$5.5 billion in revenue, reducing the need for taxes to pay for public projects and services. State-owned trust lands are to be managed to produce income to build schools, universities, prisons, state mental hospitals, community colleges, and help fund local services in many counties and the state general fund. Trust lands provide habitat for myriad native plants and animals, and provide recreational and educational opportunities to more than 9 million people each year.

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