

**Resolution 1134**

STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**FILE COPY**

RESOLUTION NO. 1134

A **RESOLUTION** establishing the Sustainable Forest Management Harvest level for the planning decade for State Trust Lands in Western Washington, and establishing policies, procedures and tasks consistent therewith. The planning decade is fiscal year 2005 through fiscal year 2014.

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES, STATE OF WASHINGTON, THAT:**

**SECTION 1.** RCW 79.10.320 directs the Department of Natural Resources to apply “sustained yield” management to state owned forest lands under its jurisdiction. The law requires the Department to periodically adjust acreages designated for inclusion in the sustained yield management program, and calculate a sustainable harvest level. The “sustainable harvest level” means the volume of timber to be scheduled for sale from state-owned lands during a planning decade. This is part of the Department’s strategic plan for sustainable forest management. RCW 79.10.310 provides for sustainable harvesting on a continuing basis without major prolonged curtailment or cessation of harvest, as required by state law.

**SECTION 2.** RCW 43.30.215 authorizes the Board to establish policies concerning the management of forest lands within the Department’s jurisdiction. The Board has adopted a number of forest land policies and compiled them in a document entitled the “Forest Resource Plan”. In addition, the Department has adopted procedures and tasks to implement the Board’s policies and manage the forest land.

**SECTION 3.** In 2000, the Board and the Department began the process of re-examining the Western Washington sustainable harvest level and associated policies, procedures and tasks. In beginning this process, the Board set overall goals to provide for sustainable stewardship of state forest lands, revenue for schools and other beneficiaries, healthy forest ecosystems and productivity, and benefits for all the people of Washington. From 2000 to the present, the Board and the Department have reviewed enormous amounts of data and information pertaining to the environmental, societal, and economic implications of various harvest levels and amendments to Forest Resource Plan policies and procedures. The sources of information included:

- An Environmental Impact Statement,
- Extensive public input,
- DNR staff analyses and computer simulations,
- Expert opinions from the Sustainable Forestry Technical Committee, and
- Independent review by the members of the Board of Natural Resources.

**SECTION 4.** The Department issued a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) in November 2003. The DEIS identified six alternatives without identifying a preferred alternative. Scoping comments, multiple public meetings, extensive written comments on the DEIS, direct public comments to the Board of Natural Resources, special Board Sustainable Forestry Workshops, comments from the Sustainable Forestry Technical Committee, outputs from the *Options* policy simulation model, and the DEIS itself, all have provided important information that led to the development of a preferred alternative. At its March 2004 meeting, the Board adopted Resolution 1110, which provided direction to the Department on how to develop and implement the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative was analyzed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), issued July 30, 2004. The Board reviewed the FEIS. At the August and September 2004 Board meetings, the Board conducted further discussions regarding the sustainable harvest level, and the associated policies, procedures and tasks.

**SECTION 5.** The Board and the Department have carefully and fully considered the economic effects on trust assets of the various proposed sustainable harvest levels and

associated policies, procedures and tasks. The Board and the Department have also carefully considered the Environmental Impact Statement and the social effects associated with their decisions. Accordingly, the Board and the Department find as follows:

A. The environmental impacts that may result from the implementation of the chosen policies, procedures and tasks, and of harvesting at a mean annual level of 597 million board feet per year over the planning decade are within the range of impacts evaluated in the FEIS.

B. The choices in the FEIS's Preferred Alternative provide for a stable and sustainable flow of revenue for each trust, while allowing sufficient annual and inter-decadal variation to capitalize on market trends and available timber inventory. This enables the Department and the Board to focus more on optimizing the value of future timber sales, in addition to providing a predictable flow of timber volume.

C. In selecting the Preferred Alternative, the Board and the Department considered how their choices affect the trust asset base and trust asset production both from a short-term and a long-term perspective. The Preferred Alternative's suite of choices reflects an appropriate balance between the interests of the current beneficiaries and the interests of future beneficiaries.

D. In adopting the sustainable harvest level, the Board and the Department will use innovative silvicultural practices (referred to as "biodiversity pathways") to address forest health concerns by creating more structurally diverse forests, with a priority for habitat, across the landscape as appropriate, while simultaneously increasing the production of trust revenue. Use of these silvicultural practices will also help meet the habitat goals of the Department's federally approved Habitat Conservation Plan more quickly and thus increase management flexibility over the long term, to the benefit of the trusts.

E. Adoption of the policies, procedures and tasks embodied in the Preferred Alternative, and the adoption of a mean annual sustainable harvest level of 597 million board feet per year, enables a net economic benefit to each of the trusts, while providing an appropriate level of income stability over time.

**SECTION 6.**

A. The Board hereby adopts the Western Washington sustainable harvest level of 597 million board feet per year for the planning decade of fiscal year 2005 through fiscal year 2014. The Department is directed to implement this resolution by preparing sales that are consistent with this sustainable harvest level and all policies adopted by the Board. The Department shall employ a structured monitoring and reporting program. The Department shall present an annual sales plan to the Board on or about April of each year.

B. The Department shall annually report to the Board of Natural Resources its assessment of the economic, ecological, and social results of implementing the Board's adopted sustainable harvest level. The Department shall provide a report on its efforts to implement "biological pathways" and other innovative silvicultural practices in connection with implementing the sustainable harvest level. Consistent with Policy A in Attachment One of this resolution, the Department shall report to the Board any significant new information or changing circumstances bearing substantially on its achievement of the sustainable harvest level.

**SECTION 7.** The Board hereby adopts the policies identified in Attachment One to this Resolution (*Sustainable Forestry Policy Changes*). The Department hereby adopts the procedures and tasks identified in Appendix F.4 of the FEIS. Attachment One and the procedures and tasks in Appendix F.4 are incorporated herein by reference.

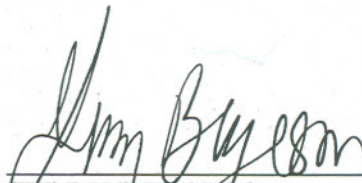
APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Natural Resources, Department of Natural Resources, State of Washington, this seventh day of September, 2004.

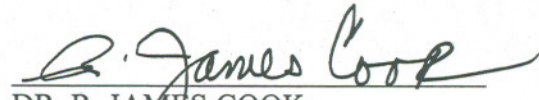
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the Commissioner of Public Lands.



  
DOUG SUTHERLAND  
Commissioner of Public Lands

  
BOB NICHOLS  
Governor's Office

  
TERRY BERGESON  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

  
DR. R. JAMES COOK  
Dean, College of Agriculture and  
Home Economics

  
DR. BRUCE BARE  
Dean, College of Forest Resources

  
GLEN HUNTINGFORD  
Jefferson County Commissioner

Approved as to form:

  
Assistant Attorney General

Date: September 7, 2004



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands

Resolution 1134 - Attachment One

September 07, 2004

## **Sustainable Forestry Policy Changes**

### **Board of Natural Resources Policy Changes**

#### **A. CIRCUMSTANCES TRIGGERING THE NEED FOR A RECALCULATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE HARVEST LEVEL**

##### **DISCUSSION**

State law requires that the Department shall manage the state-owned lands under its jurisdiction, which are primarily valuable for the purpose of growing forest crops on a sustained yield basis. "To this end, the Department shall periodically adjust the acreages designated for inclusion in the sustained yield management program and calculate a sustainable harvest level." (RCW 79.10.320). State law also defines sustainable harvest level as, "Sustainable harvest level means the volume of timber scheduled for sale from state-owned lands during a planning decade as calculated by the department and approved by the board." (RCW 79.10.300(5)).

The legislature envisioned that the sustainable harvest level is likely to need adjustment from time to time, based on the quantity, quality, growth, and availability of the timber resource on state lands. At the time the statute was enacted, the suitable time period was thought to be one decade, with the average annual sustainable harvest level remaining constant during the decade.

Currently, the factors affecting a stable long-term sustainable harvest calculation remain dynamic. Regulatory requirements are in flux, and information about the resource base continues to improve. In addition, new more powerful and flexible computer models have emerged, making it feasible to adjust the harvest level as circumstance changes. At the same time, the fundamental trust obligations and statutory requirements continue to be the foundation of policy.

##### **POLICY**

**The department, with board approval, will recalculate the statewide sustainable harvest level, for board adoption no less frequently than every ten years.**

**The department will adjust the calculation and recommend adoption by the board when the department determines changing circumstances within the planning decade suggest**

that an adjusted harvest level would be prudent. Such circumstances may include major changes in legal requirements, significant new policy direction from the board, new information about the resource base available for harvest, or changes in technology.

## **B. DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE HARVEST CALCULATION**

### **DISCUSSION**

State law defines "sustained yield" as "management of the forest to provide harvesting on a continuing basis without major prolonged curtailment or cessation of harvest." (RCW 79.10.310). A common law duty of the state as trustee is to not favor either present or future trust beneficiaries over each other. Sustained yield management helps accomplish this duty.

Within that broad statutory direction, various interpretations of sustained yield management are possible. Differences in interpretation may relate to the size of areas subject to separate calculations of sustainable yield of timber, for example, either the state trust ownership as a whole or smaller areas; the degree of variability of timber harvest over time; and the aspect of forest management to be the primary focus of sustainability, such as area or volume of timber harvested or retained, or revenue earned.

In the past, the department has divided the forest land base into separate sustainable harvest units based on county boundaries, the department's administrative regions, and several separately treated areas. In addition, the department has set the variability of harvest over time based on a non-declining even-flow objective. The department has calculated sustainable yield based on timber volume. The Board of Natural Resources has expressed a desire for a more flexible system as the basis for the sustainable harvest calculation.

(Lands formerly know as Forest Board Transfer and Forest Board Purchase are now defined in RCW 79.02.010(10) as "State Forest Lands." For purposes of this policy, former Forest Board Transfer lands will be called "State Forest Trust Lands," and former Forest Board Purchase Lands will be called "State Forest Purchase Lands.")

### **POLICY**

**For Western Washington the department will calculate, and the Board will adopt, a separate long-term decadal sustainable harvest level, expressed as mean annual timber volume for a planning decade, for twenty distinct sustainable harvest units, as follows: Each of the seventeen county beneficiaries of State Forest Trust lands separately, and all of the federally granted trusts and State Forest Purchase lands in Western Washington together, with the exception that the Olympic Experimental State Forest and the Capitol State Forest shall each have a separate calculation regardless of trust.**

**In order to ensure intergenerational equity among beneficiaries, within each sustainable harvest unit, the department shall calculate an estimated multi-decade harvest level such**

that the mean annual timber volume for any decade should not vary up or down more than 25% from the level of the preceding decade, except that all State Forest Trust lands outside Capital State Forest and Olympic Experimental State Forest shall be treated as a single sustainable harvest unit for purposes of achieving the allowable variation between decadal timber harvest levels. In order to take advantage of shorter term operational or market opportunities, the harvest level for any year within the planning decade may also fluctuate up to 25% plus or minus from the mean annual harvest level adopted by the Board, as long as the decadal mean is sustained over the decade.

Subject to all applicable legal and policy direction, the department will analyze the financial characteristics of forest stands in order to optimize the economic value of forest stands and timber production over time, in calculating the sustainable harvest level, in planning and scheduling timber harvests, in making investments in forest growth, and in searching for the least-cost methods of achieving other forest management objectives.

### **C. GENERAL SILVICULTURAL STRATEGY APPLIED TO THE TIMBER RESOURCE BASE AVAILABLE FOR SUSTAINABLE HARVEST IN WESTERN WASHINGTON**

#### **DISCUSSION**

The department defines silviculture as the art and science of cultivating forests to achieve objectives. The department uses a flexible, site-by-site approach for evaluating and implementing silvicultural treatments, based on site specific, rotational or long term analysis incorporating return on investment, variable biological conditions, and physical limitations. Site-specific silvicultural prescriptions include intensive activities such as improved planting stock, site preparation, fertilization, and thinning, as budgets allow at the time prescribed activities come due. Innovative silvicultural treatments may be used to create, develop, enhance, or maintain forest biodiversity and health. For example, the objective of the "biodiversity pathways" approach to silviculture, presented by Carey et al (1996) is for simultaneous increases in production of both habitat and income. This approach may be used to create complex, multi-aged stand structures that sustain key forest stand elements to replicate vital ecological functions at the stand and landscape levels.

All silviculture strategies are applied within a context of specific stand-level or larger area objectives to achieve long-term sustainable flow of forest products, services and other relevant values. Stands whose progress toward objectives is below potential are generally chosen for management intervention. Stands selected for regeneration harvests include but are not limited to those that have a low possibility for a positive response to partial harvest regimes.

#### **POLICY**

The department will follow legal requirements in maintaining the greatest possible portion of the trust forest lands as on-base.

The department will provide professional management of forestlands through active stewardship of on-base lands. Active management of the land base will be carried out as an integral part of the department's fiduciary responsibilities to achieve, on a landscape basis, a combination of forest structures that over time provide for broad and balanced economic,



**ecological and social benefits. The department will use intensive and innovative silviculture to guide the desired progression of stand development to simultaneously produce trust revenue and create structural diversity across the landscape.**

**The department will target over time 10 to 15 percent of each western Washington HCP Planning Unit for old forests based on structural characteristics. In meeting these targets, Old Growth Research Areas will continue to be deferred and existing old growth (as defined by the HCP) and older stands will be a priority focus in developing the HCP Planning Unit targets.**