



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Doug Sutherland - Commissioner of Public Lands

Management Strategies for Blanchard Forest State Trust Lands A WORKING FOREST IN AN URBAN SETTING

I. Manage Blanchard Forest according to Four Management Zones and Two Management Overlays with appropriate management emphasis (See Preliminary Map of Management Zones, and Map Addendum).

A. Management Zones

1. **Core zone** managed in a similar manner to a permanently protected Natural Resource Conservation Area with emphasis on wildlife habitat, older forest conditions, vistas, and maintenance of forest ecosystem health; while allowing non-motorized, low impact recreation such as horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, and hang gliding.
2. **Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) areas** managed consistent with the goals, objectives, and conditions of the HCP regarding ecologically sensitive areas and protected species and habitat requirements.
3. **High visual sensitivity zone** managed for visual impact mitigation as guided by the Board of Natural Resources new Policy for Sustainable Forests through the use of visually sensitive management prescriptions.
4. **General management zone** managed for revenue production for trust beneficiaries consistent with the trust mandate, the HCP and other applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

B. Management Overlays (to all zones)

1. A future recreational overlay will be developed for trails and other recreational uses that provide multiple recreational experiences in each of the management zones but does not reduce the net area available for timber production within the general management or high visual sensitivity zone.
2. A future demonstration working forest overlay will be developed that emphasizes natural resource stewardship, the role of State Forest trust lands and the enduring values of a working forest in an urban setting.

II. Support maintaining working forests and securing sustainable timber supply in Skagit and Whatcom Counties using a variety of tools consistent with local Growth Management policies (RCW 36.70A).

- A. Support state acquisition of private timber lands from willing landowners in proximity to Blanchard State Forest
- B. Support an array of tools, such as purchase of development rights and conservation easements to permanently conserve timberlands as working forests and to prevent conversion of additional forest lands.
- C. Develop and implement strategies to conserve and stabilize private industrial timber supply while exploring ways to encourage sustainable timber production from non-industrial forest landowners.
- D. Form public and private partnerships to work with the U.S. Forest Service on implementing federal land management plans on the Mount Baker - Snoqualmie National Forest. The initial focus will be the Finney Adaptive Management Area.¹
- E. Seek support from Washington's congressional delegation and the U. S. Department of Agriculture for the objectives in II(D).

III. Provide Skagit County Trust Compensation

- A. Work with Skagit County to develop strategies to fully compensate the Skagit County State Forest Trust including the junior taxing districts that currently receive revenue from Blanchard forest, to replace revenues that would otherwise be lost from the core management zone. These strategies should include the acquisition of in-holdings in and around Blanchard Forest and other holdings in and adjacent to DNR-managed forest lands in Skagit County for general forest management.
- B. Develop contingency strategies for the core zone if milestones for compensation funding cannot be reached within 5 years.

IV. Ensure Long-term Durability of Blanchard Management Agreement

- A. The parties of the "Blanchard Forest Strategies Group" agree to fully support these recommendations and to speak and act in their support in order to ensure the future vision of Blanchard Forest as a working forest in an urban setting.
- B. Design a mechanism that ensures the long-term durability of the management of Blanchard Forest and all the recommendations of this proposal.

¹ The Northwest Forest Plan created the Finney Adaptive Management Area to encourage innovative and creative resource management approaches, with a management objective of restoring late-successional and riparian habitat components.

Preliminary Map of Blanchard Forest Management Zones

It is the intent of the DNR to create a core zone that is approximately 1,600 acres. For further detail, see map addendum.

Legend

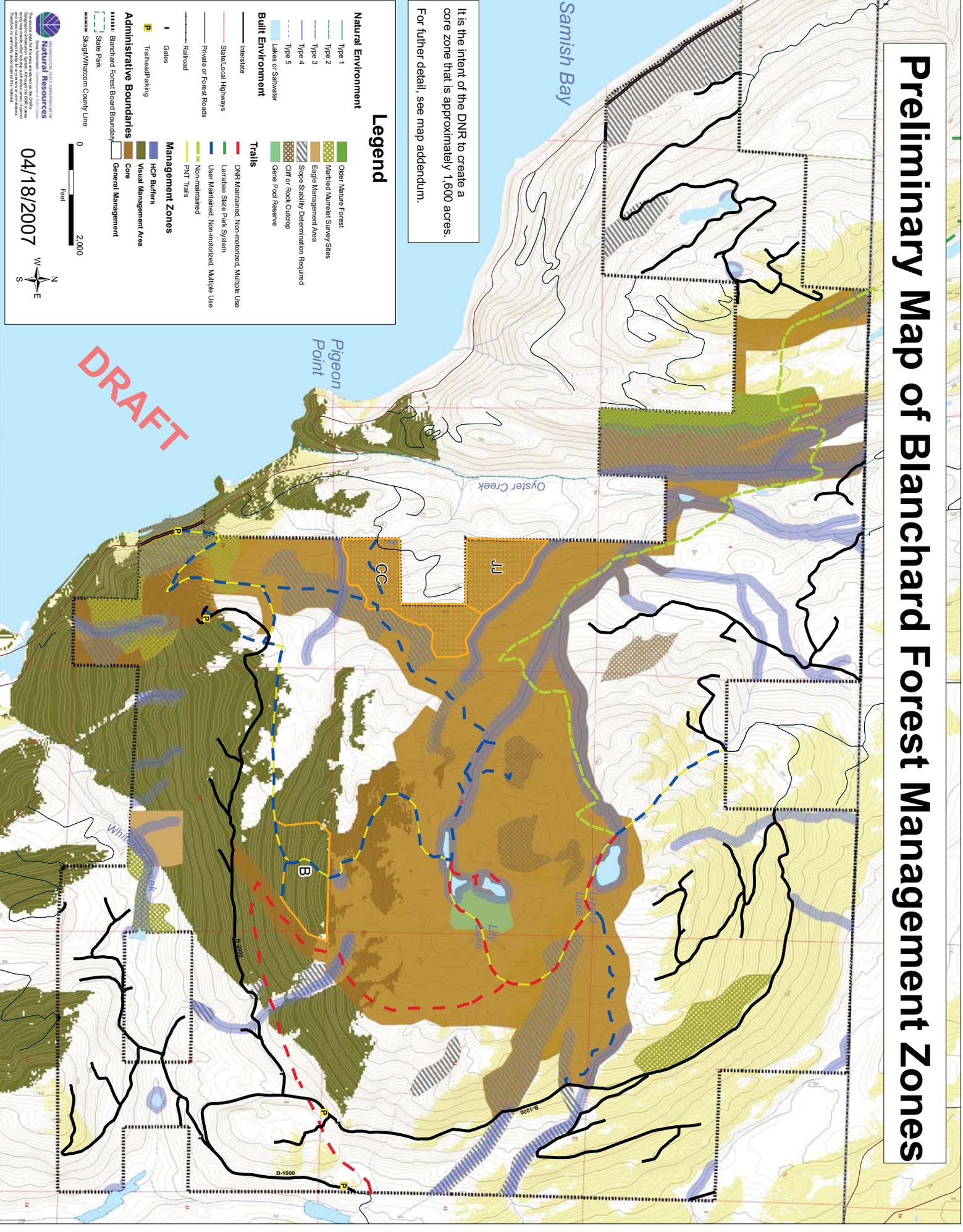
Natural Environment	
Type 1	Other Mature Forest
Type 2	Marked Matured Survey Sites
Type 3	Eagle Management Area
Type 4	Slope Stability Determination Required
Type 5	Cliff or Rock Outcrop
Lakes or Saltwater	Gene Pool Reserve
Built Environment	
Interstate	Trails
State/Local Highways	DNR Maintained, Non-motorized, Multiple Use
Private or Forest Roads	Lanesee State Park System
Railroad	User Maintained, Non-motorized, Multiple Use
Gates	Non-maintained
Trailhead/ parking	PMT Trails
Management Zones	
Blanchard Forest Board Boundary	HCP Buffers
State Park	Visual Management Area
Shag/Watcom County Line	Core
	General Management



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Addendum to Preliminary Map of Blanchard Forest Management Zones

Core Size

- The map representing Blanchard Forest and the core zone will require further refinement. It has been provided as a reasonable representation of the intent of the Blanchard Forest Strategies Group and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A final map for management purposes (based on additional field inspection and detailed mapping) will be developed by DNR for review and use with the future Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee (see below).
- It is the intent of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources to create a core zone that is approximately 1,600 acres in size.
- DNR will work in collaboration with the future Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee to do additional review of timber management strategies in three areas: labeled “CC” and “JJ” along the western edge of the core and “B” on the southern slope outside the core.

Ecological Management inside the Core Zone

- Intent is to hasten the development of late succession conifer forest without roads, compatible with recreational objectives for the core.
- Ecological management will be consistent with management activities described in the Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA) statute.
- Timber volume and revenue is a by-product, not an objective, of ecological management inside of the core.
- Based on management strategies and plans to be developed by DNR, in collaboration with the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee (see below).
- Develop a phased approach, with expansion of areas receiving ecological management in select areas based on experience in initial phases and review by the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee.
- Objective is to conduct ecological management without roads. However, if DNR and the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee determine that roads will assist in enhancing ecological benefits under special circumstances, roads would meet following conditions: 1) temporary in nature and minimal in length, 2) use of construction standard with minimal impact, 3) would be removed (at a standard in between “obliteration” and “abandonment”) after use, ideally within 1 year.

Recreation and Education

- When proposed harvest activities intersect with recreational uses, DNR will work with user groups and the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee to consider appropriate strategies for managing potential conflicts (i.e., signage and advance notice, potential trail relocation, and other approaches).
- DNR will consult with the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee in developing recreational and educational/demonstration working forest overlays.

Roads

- Outside of the core DNR will develop a road system to support the anticipated harvest.
- DNR will construct roads in the southwest quadrant (between Max's Shortcut Trail and the trail from Chuckanut Drive to Oyster Dome) and in the eastern quadrant (above the B-2000 road and below the core zone). DNR also can construct a road from the Southwest quadrant to the Eastern quadrant, along the southern slope outside of the core zone. If a road along the southern slope is built it will be designed and constructed to create a road that is smaller than a "typical" logging road and reduces impacts on recreational use but still meets the department's operational needs and complies with the state Forest Practices rules regarding road construction.

Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee

- Assist DNR decision-making with recommendations for management of Blanchard Forest (both inside and outside of the core).
- Serve as the community-based entity to help implement the agreement reached by the Blanchard Strategies Group.
- At a minimum, membership on the advisory committee would 1) be consistent with the membership interests represented on the Blanchard Strategies Group – a broad representation of interests (including a range of non-motorized, low-impact, recreational interests), and 2) include forest ecology expertise. The interests represented on the Strategies Group include Skagit County (representing beneficiaries' interests), the Friends of Blanchard Mountain, Backcountry Horsemen, Skagit County business and civic interests, Skagit Land Trust, Conservation Northwest, Skagit Forest Advisory Board, and timber/forest management expertise.
- Committee would operate with an interest-based consensus approach.

Implementation

- DNR will work with parties to prepare a formal agreement, signed by the parties participating in the Blanchard Strategies Group.
 - Agreement will provide time horizon (5 years has been suggested) for all parties to support actions/strategies described in this document and the Proposed Management Strategies for Blanchard Forest State Trust Lands– i.e. maintain or increase timber supply in Skagit County, provide Skagit County Trust compensation, maintain or increase public and private working forests in Skagit and Whatcom County.

- If milestones are not achieved within 5 years, agreement on Blanchard Forest will need to be revisited.
- DNR will collaborate with the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee as part of its process to develop management strategies and plans that include Blanchard Forest.
- During initial five year implementation phase, DNR will conduct harvest in areas outside of the core zone consistent with the DNR sustainable harvest model (currently covering the period of 2004 to 2014) for the Skagit County State Forest Trust Lands. Based on that model, the annual area harvested on Blanchard Forest will average approximately 2% of the entire ownership (currently 4827 acres) in that area until such time that full compensation is secured and/or a new sustainable harvest level is calculated that places the core in long-term deferral status. DNR will review proposed harvests with the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee and the community.
- In consultation with the Blanchard Forest Advisory Committee, the department will make changes in forest, ecosystem and recreational management strategies based on new information or changing circumstances.