



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands

Filling a Niche in Conservation of High Conversion Risk Forests

Washington State's Community Forest Trust

2011 Washington/Oregon SAF Conference

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Situation

- Two million acres of forested state trust lands managed for revenue for schools and other beneficiaries
- 120,000 acres of natural areas
- 22-year method via budget proviso to transfer suitable school trust lands into conservation ownership with compensation to trust (to date: over \$700 million; over 100,000 acres)
- Compensation includes purchase of replacement school trust lands – recent legislative focus is on replacement lands at moderate risk of conversion
- Still no solution for existing trust lands with high risk of conversion, and more local than statewide conservation value



Goals for Community Forest “Trust”

- “Fill the gap” in transferring existing fiduciary trust lands with locally important conservation value into more appropriate status
- Full compensation to fiduciary trust beneficiaries
- Revenue producing activities allowed at least sufficient to fund management costs and produce some local economic benefit
- Collaborative planning with local interests; strong local buy-in
- Also address high-conversion-risk private forest lands with willing sellers



ESHB 1421 Passed Washington Legislature

House 55-43

Senate 39-10

- Governor signed into law April 29.
- Strong support from conservation groups, land trusts, some industrial forest landowners. No opposition testimony.
- Pending biennial capital budget may contain funding for initial acquisitions.



Issues

- Real urgency of filling the perceived “gap,” versus normal trust land timber management, transfer to conversion status, or dispose of to private parties
- Believability of local community supporting “lighter touch” working forest management over time
- Prudent use of limited state capital funding
- Need for literal local buy-in versus recognize local fiscal limitations
- State – local roles in managing Community Forest Trust
- Acquisition of private lands and larger community forest “districts”



Prospects

- Early action if capital budget funds appropriated
- Build program – source of up-front funding?
- Engage potential local community partners
- Respond to ad hoc requests





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