



MEMORANDUM

June 26, 2006

SEPA File No. 05-041501

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Rochelle Knust, SEPA Center Manager

SUBJECT: **FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT ON THE
POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE FORESTS**

This is to advise you that pursuant to WAC 197-11-360 and WAC 197-11-455, the Department of Natural Resources (“the department”) has issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the following:

The purpose of this proposal is the adoption of new policies that will replace the 1992 *Forest Resource Plan* for forested lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources. Twenty-five policies are proposed for four major categories:

Economic Performance: Three policy subject areas make up this category: Financial Diversification, Financial Assumptions, and Harvest Deferral Designations. These policy subject areas will provide direction to the department for decisions that directly affect the trust obligation of generating sustainable revenue from the management of forested state trust lands. The alternatives span levels of risk that the Board of Natural Resources is considering in pursuing new markets for forest and other products. They cover the frequency and approach to reviewing financial assumptions, as well as what trust lands are available or deferred from harvest.

Forest Ecosystem Health and Productivity: Eight policy subject areas make up this category: Forest Health, Catastrophic Loss Prevention, Genetic Resource, Special Ecological Features, Old-Growth Stands in Western Washington, Wildlife Habitat, Watershed Systems, and Riparian Conservation. These areas will provide direction to the department for management decisions that directly affect the health and productive capacity of forest ecosystems on forested state trust lands. The overall ecological condition of the forest asset directly impacts the economic, ecological and social values that these lands can provide. Each of the environmental elements covered in these policy subject alternatives is considered integral to the total health of the forest ecosystem. As such, the emphasis is placed on the need to provide landscape-scale mitigation measures over the life of these policies.

Social and Cultural Benefits: Four policy subject areas make up this category: Public Access and Recreation, Cultural Resources, Visual Impacts, and Local Economic Vitality. These policy subject areas will provide direction to the department for management decisions that directly affect social and cultural benefits derived from forested state trust lands. The adverse environmental impacts and mitigation of impacts to both the natural and built environment are considered within a range of policy alternatives that meet state and federal law and trust objectives.

Implementation: Ten policy subjects make up this category: Forest Land Planning, General Silvicultural Strategy, Forest Land Transactions, Forest Roads, Acquiring Rights of Way, Granting Rights of Way, Research, External Relationships, SEPA Review, Implementation, Reporting, and Modification of the Policy for Sustainable Forests. These policy subject areas provide a coordinated and comprehensive framework for implementation of the *Policy for Sustainable Forests*. Their emphasis is on ensuring efficiency in implementation and correction, when necessary, to achieve the policy objectives and outcomes described in the *Policy for Sustainable Forests*. They focus on landscape-scale approaches to analyze and mitigate potentially significant adverse environmental impacts and target landscape-scale enhancements of the forest asset. Cooperation and coordination with partners is emphasized to ensure stakeholder involvement and mitigation of impacts in department plans and decisions.

The department will submit the Final EIS to the Board of Natural Resources members. Board of Natural Resources adoption of these policies will occur no sooner than seven days from the date of issuance of the Final EIS.

A copy of the Final EIS has been posted to our agency website. You may download or review this and other SEPA documents related to this file at our web address:

<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sepa>

You may also request a hard copy or CD version of the Final EIS by contacting the SEPA Center, at P.O. Box 47015, Olympia, Washington 98504-7015 or by email to: sepacenter@wadnr.gov with your request.