

Description of Relatively Low Impact Definition Dispute

The Small Forest Land Owner Caucus invokes dispute resolution on lack of consensus for TFW Policy to accept for review and recommendations to the Forest Practice Board (Board) the Proposal Initiation requesting inclusion of a specified definition of “relatively low impact” criteria in board manual 21 by the Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee to assist the department in determining whether a Small Forest Landowner alternate plan qualifies as a low impact alternate plan.

DNR did not support acceptance of the PI because they believe the criteria identified in WAC 222-12-0403(5) is being met through existing board manual guidance and the development of alternate plan templates and alternate harvest prescriptions; the Small Forest Land Owner Caucus believes that the criteria guidance to determine whether a small forest landowner alternate plan qualifies as a low impact alternate plan is not adequately addressed in board manual section 21.

The Small Forest Land Owner Caucus believes the dispute can be resolved by broadening the dispute to request a Policy review of:

- Board manual section 21 to determine if criteria exists to determine if an alternate plan submitted by a small forest landowner qualifies as a low impact alternate plan;
- The WFFA interpretation of a small forest landowner Legislative standard as outlined in the PI: “RCW regulatory mitigation (only for SFLOs) that must additionally be considered when looking at “. . . *alternate harvest restrictions on smaller harvest units* . . .” (RCW 76.13.100 (2)); and,
- The WFFA requested definition of “relatively low impact” as developed by the SFLO Advisory Committee for inclusion in board manual section 21 to provide further “Criteria to assist the department in determining whether a small forest landowner alternate plan qualifies as a low impact alternate plan”.

It’s understood by all Policy members that the existing PI doesn’t need revision because the substantive issues above can/will be resolved within this Policy dispute process, ending with a consensus (or minority/majority) report to the Forest Practice Board, without need for parts of this PI or dispute to be added to future TFW Policy agendas.

References:

RCW 76.13.100 (2) partial– “The legislature further finds that small forest landowners should have the option of alternate management plans or alternate harvest restrictions on smaller harvest units that may have a relatively low impact on aquatic resources. The small forest landowner office should be responsible for assisting small landowners in the development and implementation of these plans or restrictions.”

WAC 222-12-0403- “The (Board) manual should include: . . . (3) Template Prescriptions designed to meet resource objectives to address common situations that are repeatedly addressed in alternate plans or strategies to simplify the development of future plans or strategies, including low impact situations and site-specific physical features;” (4) Appropriate **recognition or credit for improving the condition of public resources**; and (5) **Criteria to assist the department in determining whether a small forest landowner alternate plan qualifies as a low impact alternate plan.**”