

## Washington State Department of Natural Resources

### *Draft Sustainable Harvest Technical Advisory Committee project scope and charter*

#### *Purpose*

The Sustainable Harvest Technical Advisory Committee will advise DNR on its sustainable harvest calculation in future decades, including advising on its forest inventory and modeling techniques, as well as other relevant areas important to developing sustainable harvest levels going out into the future for DNR-managed lands in Washington State.

#### *Background*

State law directs that DNR, “periodically adjust the acreages designated for inclusion in the sustained yield management program and calculate a sustainable harvest level” (RCW 79.10.320). In 2006, the Board of Natural Resources approved the *Policy for Sustainable Forests* (DNR 2006). The *Policy for Sustainable Forests* states that DNR will, “recalculate the statewide sustainable harvest level, for Board of Natural Resources adoption no less frequently than every ten years” (DNR 2006, p. 30). The *Policy for Sustainable Forests* provides policy guidance as to how the sustainable harvest level should be calculated, including defining sustainable harvest units for western Washington, defining the extent to which harvest levels can change from one decade to the next, and directing that the harvest level will “optimize the economic value of forest stands and timber production over time.”

DNR’s land management practices and the calculation of the sustainable harvest level are conducted in the context of DNR’s fiduciary responsibility under the trust mandate. As a trust manager, DNR follows the common law duties of a trustee. These include, but are not limited to: administering the trust in accordance with the provision that created it; maintaining undivided loyalty to each of the trusts and its beneficiaries; managing trust assets prudently; making the trust property productive, while recognizing the perpetual nature of the trusts; dealing impartially with beneficiaries; and reducing the risk of loss to the trusts. The Washington State Supreme Court decision in *County of Skamania v. State of Washington*, 102 Wn.2d 127, 685 P.2d 576, found that a trustee must act with undivided loyalty to the trust beneficiaries to the exclusion of all other interests and to manage the trust assets prudently. Calculating a sustainable harvest level does not preclude other revenue generating activities on state trust lands.

DNR last set the sustainable harvest level for western Washington in 2019 and for eastern Washington in 1996. The western Washington sustainable harvest level is scheduled to be reset by mid-2024 for the fiscal year 2025 – 2034 period. A date for resetting the eastern Washington sustainable harvest level is not yet set, however, DNR is gathering technical information in preparation for setting the level.

#### *Scope*

The committee will advise on technical aspects of forest estate modeling, including, but not limited to, modeling software, model formulation, model constraints, development of forest attribute yield curves, and financial and economic assumptions, as relevant. The committee will report regularly to DNR based upon agreed milestones. Reports will include an evaluation of current practices and recommendations for improvement.

Policy direction for forest estate modeling will be made by the Board of Natural Resources. Committee members may be asked to present summaries of technical recommendations material to the Board. The advisory committee could be called upon by the Board to assist in policy development.

#### *Composition of the Sustainable Harvest Technical Advisory Committee*

The committee will include at least 6 members and up to 10 members. At a minimum the committee will include:

- One member from the UW School of Environmental and Forest Sciences
- One member from the WSU College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Sciences
- One member selected from the large forest land owners/managers
- One member selected by the counties
- One member selected by the conservation caucus
- One member selected by the timber industry

#### *Member qualification*

The members will be asked to propose methods to improve forest estate modeling of DNR-managed lands, and to review technical materials including DNR’s geographic information system (GIS) data, inventory data, yield curves, economic assumptions, and model design. To be effective therefore, the members must have expert level qualifications in forest modeling, biometrics, or GIS analysis. Members should have an advanced degree (Masters or Ph.D.) or at least 10 years’ experience in forest modeling, biometrics, GIS analysis, forest economics, or related field. It is desirable for members to have experience modeling forest estate management.

#### *Member commitment*

The committee will meet quarterly beginning in spring 2020. Committee meetings are expected to last up to 8 hours. Meetings will typically take place in Olympia but the opportunity to participate remotely will be provided. Meetings may require up to several hours of preparation time, as members will be asked to review technical material, and make recommendations.

The committee will try to achieve consensus on recommendations to provide to DNR; however, consensus on all issues is not required.

#### *Staff to the Sustainable Harvest Technical Advisory Committee*

The Assistant Division Manager for Forest Informatics and the sustainable harvest lead environmental planner will lead and provide staff support to the committee.

Other Forest Resources Division staff will be called upon to present to the committee on topics in their areas of expertise.