

COMMISSIONER'S ORDER

NUMBER 202202

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Hilary Franz
Commissioner of Public Lands
Olympia, Washington 98504

COMMISSIONER'S ORDER ON CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND STORAGE

WHEREAS The Washington State Climate Commitment Act of 2021 establishes Washington as a leader in climate change policy and promotes the maintenance and enhancement of the State's ability to sequester carbon through working lands and forests; and

WHEREAS Forests, as high-carbon ecosystems, play a vital role in climate change mitigation and adaptation by sequestering and storing carbon, and thus the 2.1 million acres of state forestlands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that have a high carbon value and can play a greater part of Washington's climate solutions consistent with the applicable provisions of the various lands involved; and

WHEREAS DNR has a fiduciary obligation to manage state forestland trust assets prudently, in perpetuity, with undivided loyalty to the trust beneficiaries today and in the future and to preserve options and protect the corpus of the trust while reducing risk of loss to the trust; and

WHEREAS DNR has an obligation to manage state-owned aquatic lands to provide a balance of public benefits for all citizens of the state. Such benefits are varied and include ensuring environmental protection, utilizing renewable resources, and generating revenue in a manner consistent with the foregoing benefits, including the conservation and protection of aquatic vegetation that have high carbon value; and

WHEREAS DNR's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan called for seizing opportunities to generate benefits for trust beneficiaries and communities by incentivizing carbon sequestration on public and private lands; and

WHEREAS DNR's 2018 Plan for Climate Resilience recognizes carbon sequestration of trees and forested ecosystems as a priority opportunity to reverse greenhouse gas trends while generating revenue through carbon markets; and

WHEREAS Forest, grassland and aquatic ecosystems hold high value for cultural practice and maintenance of food sovereignty among Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples in Washington State; and

WHEREAS DNR recognizes that building climate solutions means engaging, working with, and empowering communities and local partners; and

WHEREAS DNR has the opportunity and responsibility to lead by example with innovative solutions to the climate crisis.

NOW, THEREFORE, I hereby direct Department leadership and all staff:

To consider carbon sequestration and storage opportunities for applicable DNR forested lands, agricultural lands and aquatic lands as part of and within the agency's authorities, management and stewardship role.

To develop and implement processes and procedures to identity potential carbon projects using existing authorities and statutes and if necessary, propose changes to legislative authorities, agency policy, rules, and/or procedures.

FORESTED TRUST LANDS

To identify 10,000 acres of forested lands that can be conserved for carbon sequestration and storage as part of and within the agency's authorities.

ENGAGEMENT AND REPORTING

To consult with Tribal Nation representatives to inform DNR's carbon sequestration and storage process and procedures.


To work with representatives from trust beneficiaries, counties, overburdened communities and the forest industry to inform DNR's carbon sequestration and storage process and procedures.

To report annually on DNR's progress in evaluating carbon sequestration and storage opportunities and meeting established carbon goals.

Dated this 4th day of April, 2022



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