



**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

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To: Wildland Fire Advisory Committee
From: Allen Lebovitz, Wildland Fire and Forest Health Liaison
Date: 1/20/21
Attached: DFW Shrubsteppe proviso draft
Subject: Monthly Update

- **HB1168** – Contributing to the development of HB 1168 has been a priority over the last month for the DNR Wildfire and Forest Health programs. This legislation proposes establishing the Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience Account, a dedicated wildfire and forest health fund. This fund will support proactively engaging in efforts to get ahead of the growing threat of catastrophic wildfire resulting from unhealthy forests and climate change. I have shared the initial draft, and now the bill as filed, with you and other partners and stakeholders. I strongly encourage all to review the bill and provide your comments during our upcoming meeting, and also at any time with me by email or phone or directly with our legislative staff.
- **Rangeland Grazer Coordination** - I have been working with staff from the Washington Cattleman's Association to develop closer coordination between WCA District Representatives, local grazers and DNR Region fire managers. The effort focuses on facilitating DNR Region fire managers working directly with WCA District Reps, to ensure regional grazer contact lists that are used for coordinating communications regarding fire management, are complete and accurate. The value of this is multifold and includes helping to keep affected grazers up to speed on the most current fire information, facilitating coordination between grazer's and fire managers, and providing fire managers access to grazers who can share what is often the most detailed information on terrain and access routes in the fire area.
- **DFW Shrubsteppe Fire Recovery & Preparedness Proviso** – The DNR was recently consulted on the development of a DFW sponsored Shrubsteppe Fire Recovery & Preparedness Proviso (attached). The proviso allocates \$2.35mm to DFW for 1) enhancing availability of native plant materials; 2) enhancing certified and trained on-the-ground capacity for implementation at scale; 3) support for wildlife-friendly fencing replacement; 4) support for private landowners/ranchers to defer wildland grazing and allow natural habitat regeneration; 5) species-specific recovery actions. It also supports the creation of a task force to develop a long-term strategy for shrubsteppe conservation and fire preparedness, response, and restoration. It is further proposed that the shrubsteppe task force be explicitly linked to the Wildland Fire Advisory Committee and build from the Washington State Wildland Fire 10-year Strategic Plan. Our current thinking is that I will represent DNR and the WFAC on the task force should the proviso be enacted.

I've had an in-depth conversation with WDFW concerning WFAC recommendations specific to fire protection in the shrubsteppe, which is largely comprised of "unprotected lands", as have others at DNR. WDFW affirmed its recognition of the DNR's and WFAC's roles in guiding the development of an approach for providing protection for these land. WDFW does not currently plan to address protection of "unprotected lands" with the proviso and DNR will continue to contribute to the dialogue around this issue.