





Eastside Sustainable Harvest Calculation Decision Update

November 5, 2024

A Presentation to the Board of Natural Resources

By Duane Emmons

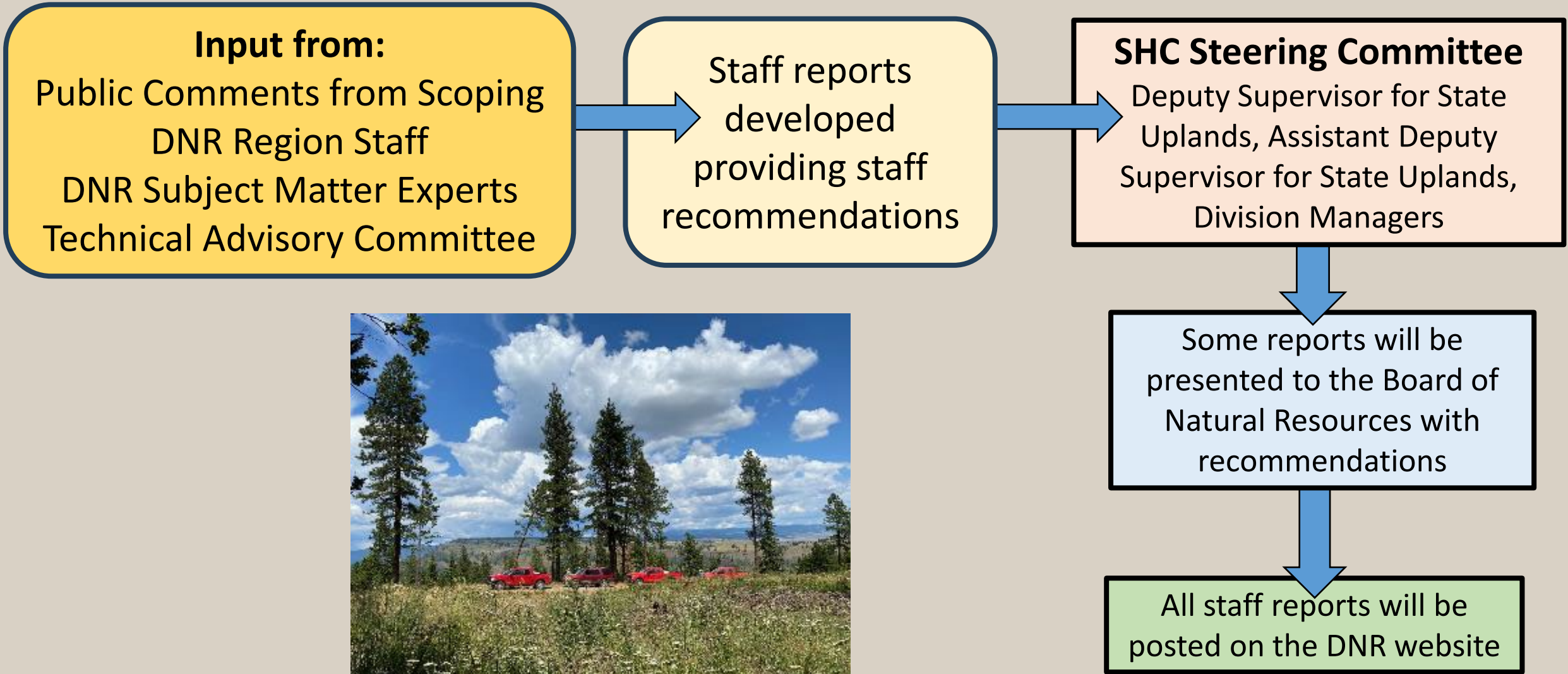


Agenda

- Sustainable Harvest Unit decision
- Harvest Flow Constraint decision
- No Action Alternative decision
- Communications Strategy update
- Project Timeline update
- Approve deviation from decadal timeline (Action Item)



Decision Making Process for Sustainable Harvest Calculation



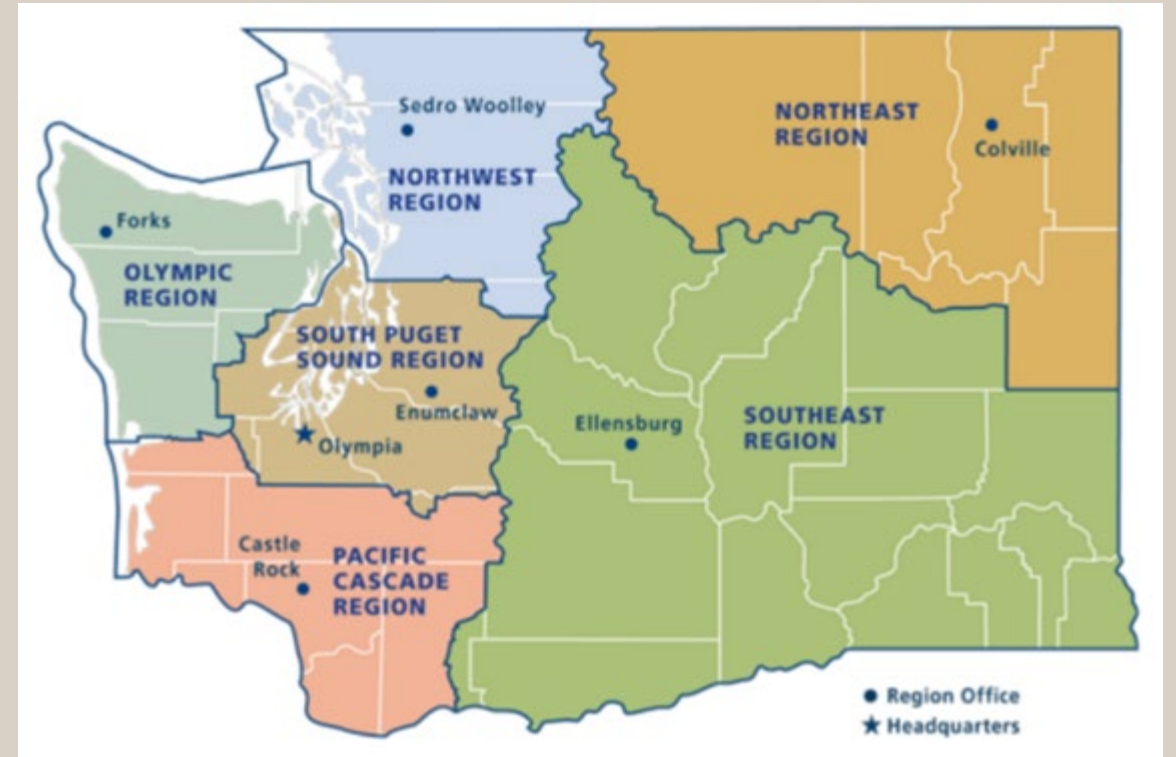
Sustainable Harvest Units (SHUs)

- A geographic area of WA state trust lands from which timber harvest is conducted on a continuing basis without major prolonged curtailment or cessation.
- Policy for Sustainable Forests: “For Eastern Washington, sustainable harvest units will be determined as part of the Eastern Washington sustainable harvest calculation.”



Sustainable Harvest Units (SHUs)

- ❖ 1996 SHUs were based roughly on DNR district boundaries
- ❖ Portions of Southeast Region were excluded from the 1996 SHC



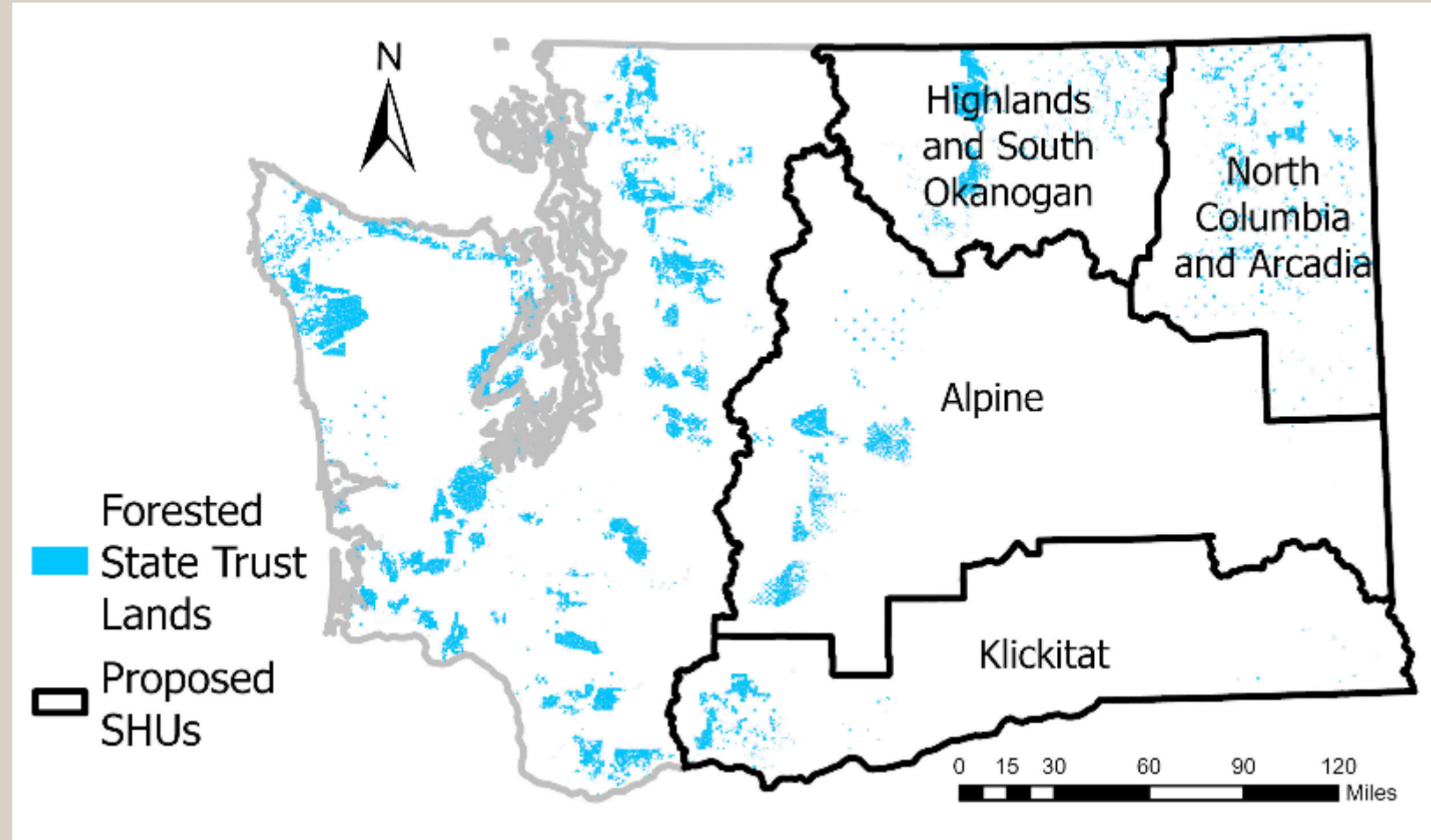
Sustainable Harvest Units (SHUs)

- ❖ Staff considered SHU configurations based on:
 - ❖ DNR Region boundaries
 - ❖ DNR District boundaries
 - ❖ Trust ownership boundaries
- ❖ Staff considered:
 - ❖ Will the SHUs be large enough to allow the model flexibility in identifying optimized solutions that meet DNR's requirements for the SHC?
 - ❖ Will the SHUs provide for the management of individual geographic areas that have similar habitat or other landscape-level constraints?

Sustainable Harvest Units (SHUs)

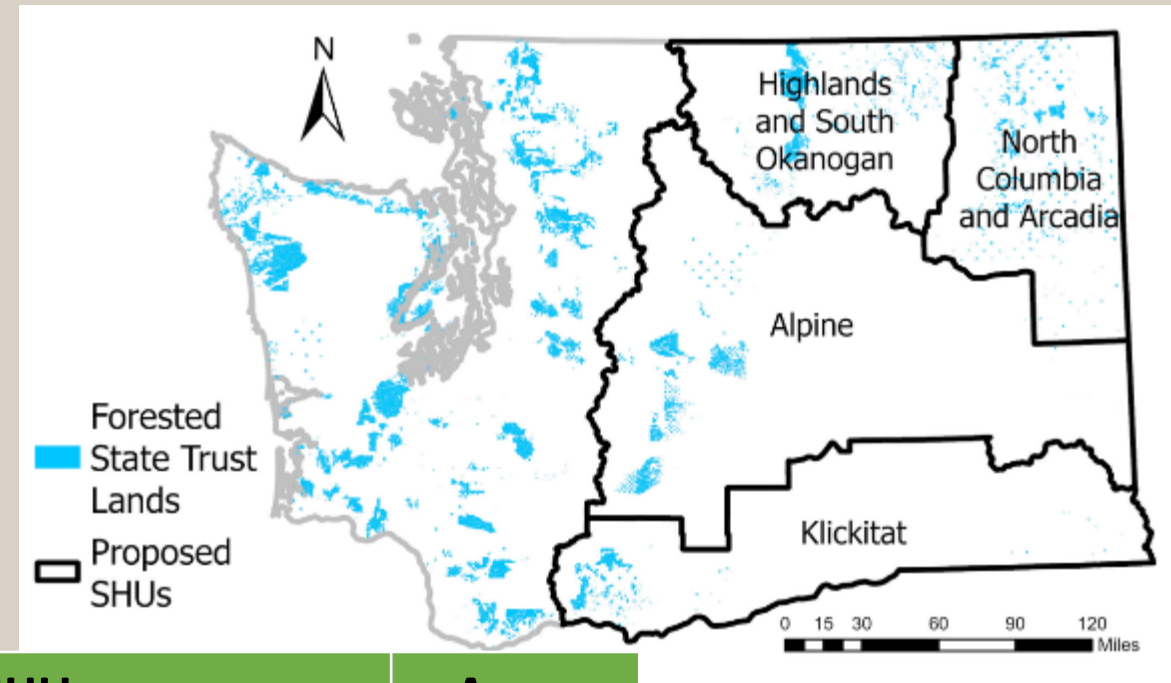
Department Decision: Four SHUs, updated from 1996 SHUs

- ❖ Expands the SHUs to encompass state trust lands in Snake River and Columbia Basin administrative units and combines North Columbia and Arcadia SHUs



Sustainable Harvest Units

- ❖ The chosen SHUs strike a balance:
 - ❖ Large enough to provide the model flexibility in providing optimized solutions for the sustainable harvest level
 - ❖ Geographically distinct enough to provide for the management of individual landscapes that have habitat or other landscape-level constraints



SHU	Acres
Northeast Region	
Highlands and South Okanogan	199,445
North Columbia and Arcadia	193,971
Southeast Region	
Klickitat	93,394
Alpine	192,828

Questions?



Harvest Flow Constraint

- ❖ The harvest flow constraint specifies how DNR will ensure intergenerational equity for its trust beneficiaries at the SHU scale by providing a sequential flow of harvest volume in perpetuity.
- ❖ RCW 79.10.310 defines that DNR's sustained yield plans will “provide harvesting on a continuing basis without major prolonged curtailment or cessation of harvest.”
- ❖ Policy for Sustainable Forests: “...within each sustainable harvest unit... the mean annual timber volume for any decade should not vary up or down more than 25 percent from the level of the preceding decade...”

Harvest Flow Constraint Decisions

- ❖ Staff will use 25% as the **maximum allowable variation between decadal harvest volume levels.**
- ❖ Staff will apply this restriction only to the planning decade and future decades in the sustainable harvest calculation.
 - ❖ Interpreting the flow constraint as forward-looking would provide the ability to recalculate a harvest level based on new data and technology without influence from the outdated 1996 harvest level.
- ❖ Staff will apply the flow constraint to the adopted eastern Washington SHUs individually.



Questions?



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No Action Alternative

- The No Action alternative is typically defined as what would be most likely to happen if the proposal did not occur. It provides a benchmark from which the other alternatives can be compared. (SEPA Handbook, WA Dept. of Ecology)
- “As the SEPA Rules do not define what the no-action alternative must look like, the lead agency has some discretion in its design.” (SEPA Handbook, WA Dept. of Ecology)



No Action Alternative

Background:

- Previously defined for the westside as the sustainable harvest level that has been approved by the board for the previous planning decade
- Last time the sustainable harvest level was calculated for the eastside was in 1996



Annual harvest levels from the 1996 sustainable harvest calculation by sustainable harvest units

Eastside SHU	1996 (MMBF/Year)
Yakima River	16.9
North Columbia	18.7
Klickitat	12.9
Highlands and South Okanogan	21.1
Arcadia	9.0
Total	78.6

No Action Alternative



Background:

There have been many changes in the laws, policies, land base, forest inventory, and technology since 1996:

- ❖ HCP Amendment No. 1 in 2004
- ❖ Revisions to the Lynx Habitat Management Plan in 2006
- ❖ Policy for Sustainable Forests in 2006
- ❖ Forest Health laws: ESHB 2376, Sec 308, SB 5546, and HB 1711
- ❖ 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan
- ❖ Major changes in land ownership and acreage
- ❖ Major changes in forest inventory due to wildfire, insects, and disease

No Action Alternative

Option	Pros	Cons
<p>Option 1: Force the model to harvest 78.6 MMBF to reflect the harvest volume of the 1996 calculation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The No Action will reflect the last 1996 SHC harvest level decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not reflect reality due to changes in policies, land base, inventory, and technology Does not provide an adequate baseline against which to compare the action alternatives
<p>Option 2: Model current management as the baseline “no action” alternative without consideration for 1996 calculation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects current land use and management. Will allow for meaningful comparison among alternatives. Incorporates and follows current laws and policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modeled No Action harvest level will be different than the 1996 SHC harvest level.

No Action Alternative

The Department has concluded that **Option 2** is the most appropriate choice of a No Action alternative. DNR will model the No Action alternative using its current land base, inventory, constraints, and management actions.

- ❖ This option would align most closely with the reality of what would happen if the SHC did not occur.
- ❖ This option would allow for the meaningful comparison among alternatives.



Questions?



SHC Communications Strategy

- Goals:
 - Inform internal and external audiences on the purpose and progress of the SHC
 - Gather feedback that will help shape the SHC
 - Increase transparency and public understanding of DNR decisions and actions



Elements of the Communications Strategy

- Approaches: inform, involve and consult
- External and internal audiences
- Communication levels: introductory, summarized, and detailed
- Communication channels for external and internal audiences
- Key communications and outreach methods
- Intersection of plan elements
- Teams and responsibilities
- Timeline



Project Progress Phase 1 & 2

Phase 1: Project Initiation and EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) Scoping *Completed May 2024*

- Draft project need, purpose, and objectives
- Issue SEPA Determination of Significance and Scoping Notice
- Engage with the public and stakeholders and receive scoping comments
- Complete scoping report
- Finalize project initiation document

Phase 2: Alternative and Model Development for DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement) *May 2024 - March 2025*

- Continue to engage with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Engage with the Board to develop alternative management scenarios (alternatives) to be analyzed through the EIS process
- Continue to make key project decisions
- Draft growth and yield and forest estate models
- Develop and implement the Communications Plan

Phase 3: DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement)

March 2025 – July 2025

- Finalize models
- Generate final forest estate model outputs (harvest levels) for each alternative
- Analyze the impacts of the alternatives on elements on the environment
- Write the DEIS and conduct internal reviews
- Publish the DEIS
- Continue to implement Communications Plan

Phase 4: FEIS (Final Environmental Impact Statement) and Board Decision

July 2025 – February 2026

- Continue to implement the Communications Plan
- Respond to public and stakeholder comments on the DEIS
- Revise the DEIS based on public and Board feedback
- Publish the FEIS
- Board adopts a harvest level from within the range of alternative harvest levels

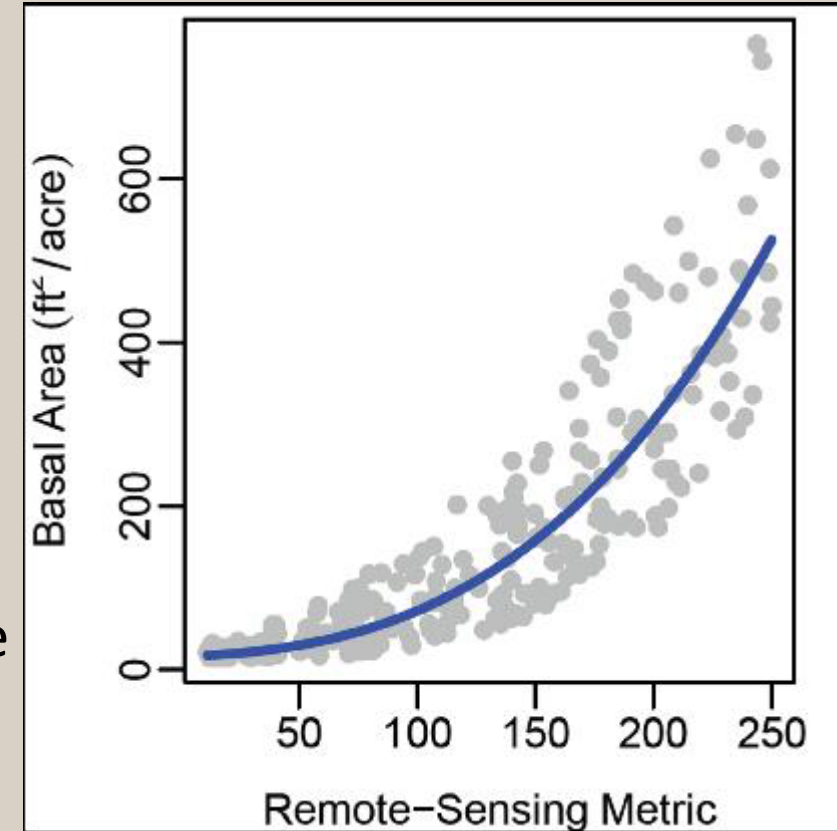


Policy on Recalculation of the SHC

The Policy for Sustainable Forestry states:

“The department, with Board of Natural Resources approval, will recalculate the statewide sustainable harvest level, for Board of Natural Resources adoption no less frequently than every ten years”

The Department requests the Board approve a variance to the decadal recalculation contemplated by the PSF as we work to complete both the Eastside and Westside calculations.



Questions?



