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An ongoing project wherein the Department of Natural Resources will partner with communities to pair our assets and expertise with sustainable development opportunities in counties around the state.



HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

Rural Communities Partnership Initiative

Social, Environmental and Economic Stewardship for Washington



Who

The Department of Natural Resources and all Washington communities, especially those with traditionally natural resource-based economies. These partnerships can be facilitated through a city council, city chamber of commerce, county leadership, local organizations and businesses or business groups. There is no minimum or requirements for a person or group to engage with the DNR and discuss potential collaboration or development and investment opportunities in a community. This effort is led by the Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz and DNR's Community Development Director Josh Wilund.

What

This initiative is an ongoing project wherein the Department of Natural Resources will partner with communities to pair our assets and expertise with sustainable development opportunities in counties around the state.

When

The Rural Communities Partnership Initiative will be publicly announced on Tuesday June 6, 2017. **A tour of 5 initial communities will take place on June 7 and 8.** There is no end date to the program, rather the Commissioner hopes to expand this work with each year of her tenure as Commissioner of Public Lands.

Where

The Rural Communities Partnership Initiative will be announced in Olympia, WA on **Tuesday, June 6. On June 7**, the Commissioner of Public Lands and the Department of Natural Resources Community Development Director Josh Wilund will visit **Colville** and **Prosser**. On June 8, the tour will continue with visits to **Willapa, Port Angeles** and **Darrington**. Throughout the summer the Commissioner will continue to meet with interested communities and groups around the state.

Why

The Department of Natural Resources is present in every county in Washington State. From the shellfish beds of the Pacific coast to the eastern wheat fields of our state, DNR oversees a profound amount of resources and expertise within the agency. An essential part of this department's mission is to steward the lands of the state, meet our trust beneficiary obligations but also to improve the quality of life for our residents to the extent that we are able. The Commissioner and agency staff believe that this department has the ability to make significant impacts in rural economies around Washington State.

Innovations and Opportunities

Mill Expansion and Forest Health

Since 2010, 13 mills have closed in Washington. Now, new technology and planned forest health treatments, present opportunities to rebuild this type of infrastructure and revitalize local economies with an active and sustainable approach to local natural resource management. Legislation from the 2017 session sets a goal of restoring 1 million acres of ailing forest in the next 16 years, which could generate more than 3 billion board feet of timber. In addition, a new technology called Cross-Laminated Timber has the potential to convert wood from these restoration projects into high-strength, affordable, and sustainable construction materials.

Recreation

The outdoor recreation economy generates \$887 billion dollars in national spending annually. In Washington State alone this means \$7.1 billion in wages and 227,000 jobs. This is in addition to the financial benefits that time in nature brings in fewer health care costs, increased productivity and quality of life. For the many communities adjacent to state trust lands, natural resource conservation areas and community forests, there are opportunities to leverage these spaces through new outdoor recreation infrastructure development and marketing. Darrington is a recent example. DNR is working toward completion of approximately twenty miles of new mountain bike trail. The first five miles will open in July 2017 and is just four miles from the town center. Over the next two years, DNR will partner with Darrington, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance and other organizations to promote this new opportunity and all that the town has to offer.

Water and Agriculture

DNR agricultural leasing generates over \$15 million in revenue for trust beneficiaries each year, while also contributing to Washington State's robust agricultural economy.

The value of these lands can be expanded for local businesses and communities through strategic development of water rights and leases. Development in sectors such as wine grapes and organic produce present new avenues for DNR and their partners to offer more Washington-grown foods to local and global markets.

Wind and Solar

In 2015, the number of jobs in the US solar industry surpassed the number in coal and that gap continues to grow. DNR currently generates approximately \$1 million in annual revenue from 21 wind turbine leases in eastern Washington and discussions of exploratory leases on state trust lands are underway with 4 solar development companies. These clean energy resources generate jobs, grow the state's clean energy sector, improve air quality, and reduce carbon pollution.

Geothermal

Washington State has five active volcanoes. While this means that each of us should be prepared for geologic events, it also means clean energy and heating opportunities for businesses and communities. DNR's preliminary assessments of geothermal potential highlight opportunities in several areas of the state including Whatcom, Lewis, Kittitas, Yakima and Klickitat counties. The resource breaks down into two categories of energy: high-heat geothermal (electricity) and low-heat geothermal (heating or direct use for buildings, residences and industrial applications).

Good Neighbor Authority

On March 10, 2017, Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz and USFS Regional Forester Jim Pena signed a Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreement. This agreement enables USFS and DNR to collaborate on increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration on Forest Service lands in Washington. The first GNA pilot project began on May 31 and will support a timber sale that restores forest health in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Community Forests

Since the legislature passed the Community Forest Trust Act in 2011, DNR is able to enter into unique working forest management and conservation partnerships with communities. Interest in community forests has been growing in recent years as land ownership patterns change and communities seek more control over their economic future. So far, two community forests have been developed under this act – the Teanaway Community Forest and the Klickitat Community Forest, which are great places to experience forest restoration, working lands stewardship, and recreation.

Land and Leasing Partnerships

DNR manages 1,300 acres of commercial properties, including areas near important transportation hubs and corridors. These lands offer the opportunity to provide local economic development through access to transportation and redevelopment of manufacturing or other business infrastructure that benefits from ready access to transport.

Carbon Storage

The majority of scenarios identified by the international science community as likely to avoid the worst effects of climate change involve a rapid shift to clean energy and sequestering significant amounts of carbon. DNR's management of 5.6 million acres of forest, range and aquatic lands puts the agency in a key position to help address this global challenge. DNR is exploring innovative ways in which carbon offset payments, available from existing and future carbon markets, could be included as part of the state lands management portfolio. Such offsets could generate returns for trust beneficiaries while sequestering carbon and reducing the risk of climate change to Washington's forests, farms, waters and communities.