

WHATCOM COUNTY
Planning & Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097
360-778-5900, TTY 800-833-6384
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Mark Personius, AICP
Director

Forestry Advisory Committee **Meeting**

LOCATION

**Hybrid Meeting: Zoom (details below) and
Northwest Annex Conference Room
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226**

Date: October 1, 2024

Time: 4:00-6:00 P.M. Pacific Time PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Whatcom County PDS is inviting you to a scheduled in person or Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87106867064?pwd=b0NLTIZnTTZqOHBGQk1mY2FQbWFkQT09>

Meeting ID: 871 0686 7064

Passcode: 722152

One tap mobile

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Forestry Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

October 1, 2024

4:00-6:00 P.M.

1. Roll call/Determination of Quorum
2. Agenda Review & Approval
3. Approval of 9/3 and 9/20/24 meeting summaries
4. Open Public Session
5. Reports (20 minutes)
 - DNR/BNR (McDonald)
 - Forestry Practices Board (Gold)
 - Ag Advisory Committee (David)
6. Old Business
 - Whatcom County Forestry Profile (David)
 - Continued discussion the posting of meeting materials to the FAC's webpage (Strong)
7. New Business
 - Forest Resilience Task Force (Petroske/McDonald)
Possible ACTION ITEM: Discuss September meeting and consider FAC recommendation(s)
8. Announcements
9. Adjournment

Attachments:

- Draft 9/3 and 9/20/24 meeting summaries
- Final letter sent to County Council re: Little Lily Timber Sale

Individuals who require special assistance to participate in the meetings are asked to contact us at least 96 hours in advance. The staff contact at Whatcom County Planning and Development Services is Cliff Strong, cstrong@co.whatcom.wa.us, 360-778-5942.

Whatcom County Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC)
DRAFT Meeting Summary
September 3, 2024

Start Time:	4:00 p.m.
Location:	Northwest Annex Central Conference Room/Zoom

Attendees – Members	Affiliation	Present	Absent (Excused?)
David New	Small forest landowner	√	
Holly Koon	Small forest landowner	√	
John Gold	Commercial forest landowner	√	
David Janicki	Commercial forest landowner	√	
Matt McGee	Harvester		√ (N)
Quentin Dills	Harvester		√ (N)
Jed Dawson	Citizen w/ forestry expertise	√	
Tracy Petroske	Citizen w/ forestry expertise	√	
Aubrey Stargell	Forest product manufacturer		√ (Y)
Susan David	Forest product manufacturer	√	
Cory McDonald	DNR	√	
		Quorum Present	
Electeds			
Staff			
Cliff Strong	W/C PDS	√	
Alex Harris	W/C PDS	√	
Public			
Alan Chapman	AAC	√	
Kaia Hayes	ReSources	√	
Roger Brock		√	
Jay McLaughlin		√	
Zeuk		√	
Brel Froebe		√	

Meeting Summary

Chair Gold opened the meeting at 4:00 PM.

Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum

Roll was called and a quorum was present.

Agenda Review & Approval

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting summary of 8/6/24 was approved.

Open Public Session

No public spoke.

Guest Speaker

- Presentation by Jay McLaughlin, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards, on the Mt. Adams Community Forest

Mr. McLaughlin presented the history, goals, and achievements of Mt. Adams Resource Stewards with the Mt. Adams Community Forest. The FAC engaged in dialogue so as to understand how the MARS' experience might be applicable and beneficial in Whatcom County.

New Business

- Presentation on Little Lilly State Lands Timber sale by Chris Hankey, WDNR Baker District Manager
Chris Hankey presented an overview of the proposed Little Lilly State Lands Timber sale, including how they developed the contract, the science that went into it, and the comments they've received so far. The FAC discussed in detail, focusing on its value and the impact its postponement might have to the Mount Baker School District.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Discuss and consider recommendation to County Council.
This action item was moved to the next meeting.

Subcommittee Reports

Parks & Recreation Forestry Planning (Knox)

Bennett Knox briefed the FAC on where they are in the process of hiring a consultant to develop a forestry management plan for Whatcom County and the City of Bellingham for public properties in the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Have received 3 responses and are developing a contract with one of the firms.

Forest Resilience Task Force

Tracy Petroski reported on the FRSF, noting that they had now met a second time and she had presented the FAC's input from the last meeting.

Adjournment

Due to lack of time the rest of the agenda was postponed until their next meeting.

Chair Gold adjourned the meeting at 6:10 PM. The next regular meeting is on October 1, 2024, 4-6pm; Zoom and Northwest Annex Conference Room.

Whatcom County Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC)
DRAFT Meeting Summary
September 20, 2024

Start Time:	2:30 p.m.
Location:	Zoom

Attendees – Members	Affiliation	Present	Absent (Excused?)
David New	Small forest landowner	√	
Holly Koon	Small forest landowner		√ (N)
John Gold	Commercial forest landowner	√	
David Janicki	Commercial forest landowner	√	
Matt McGee	Harvester	√	
Quentin Dills	Harvester		√ (N)
Jed Dawson	Citizen w/ forestry expertise	√	
Tracy Petroske	Citizen w/ forestry expertise	√	
Aubrey Stargell	Forest product manufacturer	√	
Susan David	Forest product manufacturer	√	
Cory McDonald	DNR	√	
		Quorum Present	
Electeds			
Staff			
Cliff Strong	W/C PDS	√	
Public			
Alan Chapman	AAC	√	
Kaia Hayes	ReSources	√	
Julia	CDN	√	

Meeting Summary

Chair Gold opened the meeting at 2:30 PM.

Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum

Roll was called and a quorum was present.

Agenda Review & Approval

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Open Public Session

No public spoke.

Guest Speaker

New Business

- **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and consideration of a recommendation to County Council on Little Lilly State Lands Timber sale

Chris Hankey presented an overview of the sale at the 9/3 meeting. Consideration of a recommendation to Council was tabled; however, the BNR moved their action on this matter to a sooner meeting than expected. Chair John presented a draft memo to the Council regarding a recommendation from the FAC. The FAC discussed and suggested one edit.

MOTION: A motion was made and seconded to approve the chair to revised the memo based on the discussion and then send it to the County Council and County Executive prior to the Council's meeting on 9/24. **APPROVED** 8 yes/0 no/1 abstain/2 absent

Adjournment

Chair Gold adjourned the meeting at 3:13 PM. The next regular meeting is on October 1, 2024, 4-6pm; Zoom and Northwest Annex Conference Room.

Whatcom County Forestry Advisory Committee
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226

September 20, 2024

Whatcom County Council
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Whatcom County Executive's Office
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 108
Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: proposed WDNR timber sale “Little Lilly”

Dear Chair Buchanan, Councilmembers, and Executive Sidhu:

The Whatcom Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC) offers this memorandum regarding the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) “Little Lilly” timber sale that is being considered for approval by the Board of Natural Resources on October 1st. The sale is located on the Van Zandt Dike and comprises 89 acres of variable retention harvesting of 4 MMBF of merchantable timber. Based on the minimum bid DNR has established, Whatcom County and other beneficiaries would receive \$ 1.34 million of the sale proceeds. Note that the bids at the most recent DNR auction averaged 155 % of minimum so this figure is likely conservative. During project planning and permit review, some community members have raised concerns about whether environmental values have been adequately considered and protected.

Over the past few years Council has requested that DNR increase engagement with the County regarding its proposed projects. To that end, Chris Hankey, DNR Baker District Manager, appeared before the FAC September 3 to review the Little Lilly proposal and field questions. Mr. Hankey also had appeared before FAC May 7 to preview all DNR “Planned Timber Sales in Whatcom County for Fiscal Year 2025.” Enclosed with this memorandum is a fact sheet prepared by DNR giving a summary of Little Lilly planning considerations.

FAC concludes the following:

- **Little Lilly protects old growth forests.** Of the 140 acres originally considered for harvest, 51 acres are protected in buffers, including all areas field verified to constitute contiguous areas of old growth under DNRs written policies. Individual remnant old growth trees within the sale boundary are marked for retention to maintain structural diversity following harvest. In addition, regardless of age, all trees greater than 60 inch diameter which do not pose a safety hazard will remain unharvested.
- **Little Lilly protects marbled murrelets.** The sale area has been delineated to exclude field-verified nesting habitat for this threatened seabird and a buffer to mitigate for windthrow, microclimate effects, and predation has been applied. During the development of DNR’s 2019 Long Term Conservation Strategy for Marbled Murrelet (a landscape level effort approved by US Fish & Wildlife Service and Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and evaluated under an Environmental Impact Statement) the Little Lilly planning area was determined to be non-critical for the long term viability of the species.

- **Little Lilly is not a rare or imperiled forest type.** Although a fraction of the timber sale area contains trees originating between 1858 and 1915, the ecologically significant forests in these age classes have been identified and are already protected from harvest. Of the DNR managed lands throughout western Washington, 93 % of pre-1900 and 79 % of pre-1945 forests are protected from harvest. Of the approximately one million forested acres across all ownerships in Whatcom County, 75 % are restricted from timber harvest.
- **Little Lilly protects environmental values.** The proposal was evaluated by a full suite of agencies and organizations (including Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Lummi Nation Natural Resources, and Nooksack Indian Tribe Natural Resources) for potential adverse effects to water quality, endangered species, biodiversity, and other elements of the environment. Following review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), a determination of non-significance was issued.
- **Little Lilly is appropriate from a carbon management perspective.** Although the project area undoubtedly has a large pool of stored carbon, a peer-reviewed study¹ which evaluated the carbon sequestration potential of intensive forestry as practiced in western Washington concluded that the forest sector considered as a whole (*i.e.*, in the forest, in primary and secondary manufacturing, and through the functional life of wood products), over a 100 year timeframe, has *a net beneficial impact* of approximately 1.7 million tCO_{2eq} annually, even after considering all emissions associated with harvest and industrial processes. In contrast, preserving mature forest areas, such as Little Lilly, in an unharvested state contradicts the recommendation of the United Nations COP28 UAE conference:

Recognizing that wood from sustainably managed forests provides climate solutions within the construction sector...advancing policies and approaches that support low carbon construction and increase the use of wood from sustainably managed forests...will result in reduced GHG emissions and an increase in stored carbon.

In the opinion of this Committee, DNR has carefully considered and mitigated for any adverse environmental effects. The Committee recommends that you formally and publicly support the Little Lilly timber sale. As designed, the proposed harvest aligns with the goals outlined in the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan by "... providing for and encouraging the long-term productivity, commercial management and sustained use of forest resources ... while maintaining water quality and soil productivity." Supporting the "Little Lilly" timber sale is an opportunity to maintain the integrity of this policy and support carbon-positive forest management.

Thank you for your consideration. The Committee would be willing to discuss these points with you, or answer any questions you may have at the September 24th Council meeting or at another time of your choosing.

Respectfully,



John Gold, Chair

Acting on resolution of the Whatcom County Forestry Advisory Committee, September 20, 2024: 8 yea, 0 oppose, 1 abstention

¹ Ganguly, I., Pierobon, F. & Hall, E. (2020). Global Warming Mitigating Role of Wood Products from Washington State's Private Forests. *Forests*, 11(2). doi.org/10.3390/f11020194



HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

LITTLE LILLY TIMBER SALE

Region: Northwest

County: Whatcom

District: Baker

Unit: Hamilton

Planned BNR meeting: September 2024

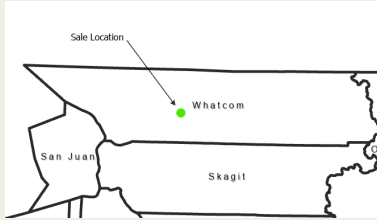
Planned auction date: October 30, 2024

FPA Classification: III

Status of timber sale: FPA Approved

Product Sales and Leasing Division

General Location



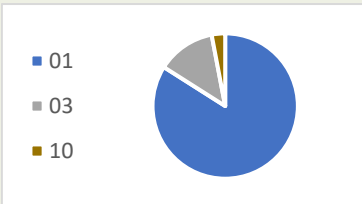
Sale Specifics

HCP Planning Unit: North Puget Planning Unit

Management Block: Van Zandt Dike

Sale Type: Lump Sum
Volume: 4,005 MBF

Trust Distribution



Conservation Facts

Original planned area: 140 ac

Final harvest area: 89.2 ac

Long-term forest cover acres:

50.8 ac

Percent contributed to Long-term forest cover: 36%

Notable Protected Features

Streams, Wetlands, Legacy Trees, FP rule-identified landforms, MM Occupied Site, Old Growth Forest, Eagle Roost Site

Certifications

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

HARVEST UNIT DETAILS

Unit	Acres	Harvest Type	Stand Origin	Stand Dev. Stage
1	2.9	VRH	Post 1950 70 years old	Maturation I
2	24.1	VRH	Post 1910 109 years old	Maturation I
3	13.9	VRH	Post 1910 109 years old	Maturation I
4	45.2	VRH	Post 1850 165 years old	Maturation I
ROW	3.1	ROW	Combination of stands listed above	Biomass Accumulation/Stem Exclusion

DESCRIPTION OF SALE

Unit 1: Species composition consists almost entirely of commercially thinned Douglas-fir dominating the overstory with an abundance of advanced hemlock regeneration in the understory. The most common tree DBH range is 16 – 22 inches. There are no scattered remnants within the unit. Retention tree selection was prioritized around wet areas with western red cedar inclusions. All trees designated for retention have been marked. There are multiple forested wetlands and type 4 streams that received a 100-foot no-harvest buffer. The western boundary of the unit is immediately adjacent to a marbled murrelet occupied site buffer.

It is difficult to assign a Van Pelt score to the stand with it being a previously thinned Douglas fir stand. It could be in the maturation 1 phase but was attained at an early age (stand is approximately 70 years old) due to its accelerated development from a commercial thinning treatment occurring approximately 20 years ago. Stand types adjacent to this unit consist of young Douglas-fir ranging from 10-25 years old.

Units 2 and 3: Species composition consists primarily of Douglas-fir dominating the overstory. The understory is comprised of moderate to



Unit 1 – Branch knots present as the dominant Douglas-fir trees are still self-pruning. Trees are very spaced out with thick hemlock regeneration in understory from the thinning treatment.



Unit 2 – Char superimposed over a springboard notch on high cut stump with stand of 100–110 year-old trees in background.



Unit 3 – A good depiction of the bole zone represented throughout the stand.

sparse advanced hemlock regeneration. The average tree DBH range is 18 – 24 inches. There are a few scattered remnants within the unit. Retention tree selection was prioritized to retain all remnants, large structurally unique trees, wet areas, and western red cedar inclusions. All trees designated for retention have been marked for retention. There are multiple adjacent type 4 streams that received a 100-foot no-harvest buffer. Portions of the sale boundary in both units are immediately adjacent to a marbled murrelet occupied site buffer. Also, an unverified bald eagle roost site is located near Unit 3.

Using the Van Pelt key, the stand keyed out to Maturation 1 with it having a very distinct bole zone throughout. According to field data, the oldest trees within the stand are approximately 109 years old. Stand types adjacent to these units consist of young Douglas-fir ranging from 10-25 years old, mature stands of similar age and structure to those within these units, and a newly identified old growth stand immediately adjacent Unit 2.

Unit 4: Species composition consists of Douglas-fir and western hemlock dominating the overstory, while there is little to no advanced regeneration in the understory. DBH's in this stand range widely from 10 to 18 inches on the ridges/thinner soils and 18 to 45 inches in the lower elevations. There are several scattered remnants within the unit. Retention tree selection was prioritized to retain all remnants, other larger structurally unique trees, wet areas and western red cedar inclusions. All trees over 60" dbh have been marked for retention and designated for retention in the timber sale contract. There are multiple adjacent type 4 streams that received a 100-foot no-harvest buffer. There is little to no coarse woody debris on the forest floor.

According to the Van Pelt key, this stand is still in the Maturation 1 phase despite its older age of approximately 165 years, according to field data. The poorer site conditions of this stand have slowed stand development, preventing it from attaining the structural complexity you would normally see from other stands of this age with better site conditions. Stand types adjacent to these units consist of young Douglas-fir ranging from 10-25 years old, mature stands of similar age and structure to those within these units, and a newly delineated old growth stand immediately adjacent Unit 2.

OLD GROWTH ASSESSMENT/CONSERVATION AREAS

Three separate old growth assessments were completed due to three separate WOGHI hits adjacent to Units 2 and 3, and within Unit 4. These were classified as moderate, high, and moderate likelihood respectively.

Unit 2 Adjacent Assessment: The protocol assessment area showed indicators and stand characteristics of late Maturation 1 phase of stand development and can be briefly described as a mature Douglas-fir dominated stand with the occasional scattered remnant. The dominant Douglas-fir has tight, moderately furrowed bark with no char and little to no epicormic branching in the crown. The remnants had loose deeply furrowed bark with char and gnarly epicormic branching in the crown. Small canopy gaps allowed for a presence of understory shade tolerant species. Patches of younger trees with cut stumps suggested that selective logging had occurred within the stand, probably sometime in the early to mid-1900's. Initial coring efforts yielded approximate stand ages equating to 10-15 years of an 1850 origin date and warranted a secondary, more intensive tree coring grid. Based on the supplemental tree coring efforts, ring counts determined that the stand had originated in, or just prior to 1850. **Unit 2 boundaries were adjusted to remove this stand from the sale entirely.**



Unit 4 – A good example of the furrowed yet tight bark characteristics from the co-dominant Douglas firs within the stand. Also note the scant understory.



Unit 4 – A look at the crowns of the larger co-dominant Douglas-fir within the stand. Note the absence of epicormic branching.



Unit 4 – An old remnant Douglas-fir marked for retention within a stand of approximately 150-165 year old trees.

The stand type within Unit 2 is much younger and is described above.

Unit 3 Adjacent Assessment: The protocol assessment area showed indicators and stand characteristics of early Maturation 1 phase of stand development and can also be briefly described as a mature Douglas-fir dominated stand with the occasional scattered remnant. The dominant Douglas-fir has tight, moderately furrowed bark with no char no epicormic branching in the crown, and even knots present further down in the bole zone. The remnants were obvious, having loose deeply furrowed bark with char and gnarly epicormic branching in the crown. Initial coring efforts yielded approximate stand ages of 100-109 years old, making any secondary coring efforts unnecessary. **This stand is included in portions of Unit 3. A small cluster of remnants were concentrated near and within an adjacent type 4 stream buffer but were not distributed wide enough to make a 5-acre polygon. All remnants within the sale area are marked for retention as described above.**

Unit 4 Assessment: This assessment area underwent a similar process to the assessment done adjacent to Unit 2 because the stands had similar dominant tree characteristics. The main differences were that the stand in Unit 4 had much less of an understory component resulting in a lack of structural complexity, as well as slightly lower ring counts following the secondary coring grid. The lack of structure could be attributed to the poorer site conditions and lack of human or natural disturbance, which was evident in Unit 2. **With the lack of structure and the highest ring count equating to an origin date of 1858, the stand was included in the proposed harvest boundary for Unit 4.**

LANDSCAPE VIEW

