

WHATCOM COUNTY

Planning & Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226-9097
360-778-5900, TTY 800-833-6384
360-778-5901 Fax



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: November 12, 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

+12532050468,,87106867064#,,,,*722152# US

+12532158782,,87106867064#,,,,*722152# US (Tacoma)

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.



Forestry Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

November 12, 2024

4:00-6:00 P.M.

1. Roll call/Determination of Quorum
2. Agenda Review & Approval
3. Open Public Session
4. Guest Speaker (20 minutes)
 - Conservation Easement Program (Lauren Templeton, Alexander Harris, invited)
5. Reports (20 minutes)
 - DNR/BNR (McDonald)
 - Forest Practices Board (Gold)
 - FRTF (McDonald / Petroske)
6. Old Business
 - Discussion of FAC Membership Appointments and Terms (Gold/Petroske)
ACTION ITEM: Consider proposal to Council to amend terms and/or appointments
7. New Business
 - Forest Resilience Task Force (Petroske/McDonald)
 - 1) Discussion of FAC feedback on Draft Community Survey (review for 1) “structure, focus areas, and clarity” 2) “major gaps or red flags”)
 - 2) **Possible ACTION ITEM:** Nominate a new FAC representative (Chris Hankey has withdrawn and Cory McDonald would replace him as the DNR rep)
 - Discussion of the County Executive’s Request for DNR Engagement on the CompPlan
Possible ACTION ITEM: Consider recommendation from FAC regarding State Lands rezone
 - Proposed WDNR *Junia* timber sale: early outreach from WDNR to Whatcom County
8. Announcements
9. Adjournment

Attachments:

- FAC membership information and appointment history
- *Draft* Forest Resilience Community Survey
- 7/8/24 letter and maps from Executive Sidhu to WDNR
- 10/28/24 response from Guthrie to WC Executive
- *Junia* timber sale *draft* documents

FAC Membership Information

Updated: January 30, 2024

Name: Forestry Advisory Committee (FAC)

Membership: 11 Voting members.

Purpose: The FAC provides review and recommendations to the Whatcom County Council on issues that affect the forestry industry. It also provides a forum for all sectors of the forestry community to contribute to discussions on the future of forestry in Whatcom County.

Enabling Statute(s): Ordinance 2013-014, Whatcom County Code 1.123

Term Information: Four years with a 2-term limit, and a required 1-year separation for more than 2 terms.

Meeting Information: Committee meets the 1st Tuesday of each month (OR TBD) as needed in the PDS Annex. (OPMA required)

Staff Contact: Cliff Strong, Planning and Development Services, 778-5942

Proposed Addition to Term Information: When a term is vacated prematurely, the replacement incumbent will serve the remainder of the defined term.

QUESTION: What to do if someone changes position? Propose to the council: it should end with the new position, but if it exceeds a 2x4 year term limit, then have a new person fill the remainder of the term, but keep the position with the same start-end dates.

	Proposed Term Start-End (when incumbent ends term, new term will be thus)	Position	Incumbent (yellow highlights = term ends in Dec 2025)	Initial Appt (will match Appointed Date unless switched position)	Initial Appt (to the CURRENT position)	End date (actual)	End date (if 4 year term, based on initial appointment date)	End date (per County)	Notes	Phone	Address	Email
	2027	Small Forest Landowner 1	David New	1/11/2022	1/11/2022	Jan 2022-->Dec2025	1/1/2026	1/31/2026				ddjnew@comcast.net
	2025	Small Forest Landowner 2	Holly Koon	11/9/2022	11/9/2022	Nov 2026-->Dec 2026	11/8/2026	1/31/2026				kendallcreekholly@gmail.com
	2026	Commercial Forest Landowner 1	John Gold	10/25/2022	10/25/2022	Oct 2026-->Dec 2026	10/24/2026	1/31/2026				jgold@spl-ind.com
	2028	Commercial Forest Landowner 2	David Janicki	10/26/2022	10/26/2022	Oct 2026-->Dec 2026	10/25/2026	1/31/2026				Djanicki@janickitogging.com
	2027	Harvester 1	Matt McGee	1/25/2022	1/25/2022	Jan2022-->Dec2025	1/26/2026	1/31/2026				mcegeoforestmanagement@yahoo.com
	2025	Harvester 2	Quentin Dills	9/1/2022	4/12/2024	Apr 2022-->Dec2025	9/1/2026	1/31/2026	CFL-> Harvester			
	2025	Citizen Forestry Experience 1	Jed Dawson	1/11/2022	1/11/2022	Jan 2026-->Dec 2025	1/10/2026	1/31/2026				Junkyardranch.jd@gmail.com
	2028	Citizen Forestry Experience 2	Tracy Petroske	12/5/2023	12/5/2023	Bagleys original term ends Dec 2026	12/4/2027	1/31/2026				tracy.petroske@gmail.c
	2027	Forest Products Manufacturer 1	Susan David	7/26/2022	10/11/2022	Oct 2026-->Dec 2026	10/10/2026	1/31/2026	CFL1 -> FPM1			sdsandawu
	2026	Forest Products Manufacturer 2	Aubrey Stargell	3 terms	2/7/2022	Feb 2026-->Dec2025	2/6/2026	1/31/2026	served April 2013 (until when); reappointed			Aubrey.stargell@gmail.c
	appointed	Department Natural Resources	Cory McDonald		?			1/31/2026				cmcdonald@dnr
How many START	Year Start of NEW full term (Dec)	WHICH position rotates (note: SAME positions have 2 years between rotations, and no 'pairs' of rotations are the same (i.e., SFL1 and SFL2 don't both rotate out the same year, AND SFL-CFE one term then SFL-H the next rotation))		Dec 2025 transition	Dec 2026 Transition							
3	2025 + n*4years	Small Forest Landowner 2 Citizen Forestry Experience 1 Harvester 2	Dawson ends. New term=4 years Dills ends. New term=4 years	Koon ends. New term=4 years								
2	2026 + n*4years	Commercial Forest Landowner 1 Forest Products Manufacturer 2		Gold ends. New term=4 years David ends. New term=4 years								
3	2027 + n*4years	Small Forest Landowner 1 Forest Products Manufacturer 1 Harvester 1	D.New ends. New term=2 years Stargell ends. New term = 2 years McGee ends. New term = 2 years									
2	2028 + n*4years	Commercial Forest Landowner 2 Citizen Forestry Experience 2		Janicki ends. New term 2 years. Petroske ends. New term 2 years.								
		QUESTION:		What to do if someone changes position? Propose to the council: it should end with the new position, but if it exceeds a 2x4 year term limit, then a new person fills the remainder of the term, but always keep the position linked to the same start-end dates.								
		Past Members										
		Forest Products Manufacturer 1 Citizen w/ Forestry Expertise	Eric Jacoby Bagley Wright				9/30/2022	Moved away Resigned 10/4/23				

- Providing wildlife habitat
- Other (please specify) _____

Values in Future Management of Forests

3. What do you value most about forests in Whatcom County? Please rank the following list from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most valuable aspect and 5 being the least.
 - Access to recreational opportunities
 - Habitat for fish and wildlife
 - Supporting a thriving local timber industry
 - Climate resilience, including carbon storage
 - Spiritual and cultural practice
4. The Whatcom County code establishing the Task Force outlines key components of the goals of the Plan, including:
 - *sustaining a thriving timber economy,*
 - *restoring healthy forest ecosystems for fish and wildlife,*
 - *addressing stream high and low flow issues,*
 - *enhancing carbon sequestration and storage,*
 - *promoting robust recreation opportunities,*
 - *improving watershed health (including Lake Whatcom),*
 - *improving wildfire, pest, and disease resistance*

Please share any components that are missing from this list. (Short answer)

Please rank these components in priority order with 1 being the highest priority and 7 being the lowest priority.

Forest Management Priorities and Challenges

5. Given the key components of the plan outlined above (please see question 4) what are the biggest threats to achieving these goals? Please rank the following threats on a scale of 1 to 6 based on a priority action area, with 1 being the greatest threat to achieving forest resilience goals and 6 being the least threatening.
 - Changes in land use and increased development
 - Poor or inadequate forest management regulations
 - Excessive forest management regulations
 - Impacts of climate change (extreme weather events, wildfire, pests and disease, etc.)
 - Changing local economy and reduced timber infrastructure
 - Reduced funding for public land management agencies (U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Whatcom County, City of Bellingham)

- Lack of coordination among major landowners
- Other _____ (please specify)

6. The Plan will make recommendations for forest management given limited resources. Please rank the following actions on a scale of 1 to 5 based on a priority action area, with 1 being the highest priority and most important actions and 5 being the lowest priority/ least important actions.

- Development of recreational infrastructure on County-owned forests such as trails, parking lots, bathrooms, etc.
- Investment in staff capacity to support strategic stewardship planning
- Coordination with the timber industry to support sustainable timber harvest and maintain a robust forestry economy
- Future acquisitions of timber land by public agencies including Whatcom County and/or partners to implement resilient forest management practices
- Investment of time and staff capacity to coordinate between forest land managers in Whatcom County (both public and private)

7. Given the definition below, what do you anticipate are the biggest challenges to achieving forest resilience? (Select the top 3)

Forest Resilience: Capacity of forest ecosystems to experience change including natural, anthropogenic, and climate-associated disturbances while retaining, recovering, and enhancing ecosystem composition, structure, and function and adapting to changing and future conditions.

- Climate change
- Urban development
- Wildfires
- Invasive species
- Conversion of forest land
- Pollution
- Other (please specify): _____

8. What is your zip code? (This information helps us understand which communities are responding to the survey)

Demographics (Optional)

The following questions ask about you and your household. This information will help us make sure we hear from all people in Whatcom County.

These questions are all optional, and your responses are confidential.

How do you identify? Please select all that apply.

- Female Male Non-binary Gender(s) not listed here

How old are you?

- 17 or younger 25 - 34 45 - 54 65 - 74
- 18 - 24 35 - 44 55 - 64 75 or older

How do you identify? Please select all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Race(s) or ethnicity not listed here (please specify):

- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Spanish origin

DRAFT

**WHATCOM COUNTY
EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

County Courthouse
311 Grand Avenue, Suite #108
Bellingham, WA 98225-4082



Satpal Singh Sidhu
County Executive

July 8, 2024

Department of Natural Resources
Northwest Regional Office
919 N. Township St.
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284

RE: Request for Engagement and Comment

NW Region Manager Jay Guthrie:

Whatcom County is excited to continue and expand upon our engagement with DNR leadership and staff. There are three initial items related to forests, forestry, and forest ownership that Whatcom County would like to coordinate on with DNR.

1. The Growth Management Act (GMA), at RCW 36.70.A.060, requires counties to adopt comprehensive plans and development regulations that designate and conserve forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance. In total, Whatcom County has designated more than 226,000 acres of both private and public forest lands of long-term commercial significance. There are two different land use designations that comprise GMA forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance in Whatcom County:
 - a. Commercial Forestry (CF)—intended for larger parcels (generally 40 acres or larger) solely devoted to growing trees that allows specific forestry management compatible uses but no residential development rights. See [WCC 20.43](#)
 - b. Rural Forestry (RF)—intended for somewhat smaller forest parcels and woodlot landowners (generally 20 acres or greater) devoted to growing trees that allows specific forestry management compatible uses but also grants very low-density residential development rights at a density of one unit/20 acres. See [WCC 20.42](#)

The DNR owns approximately 82,721 acres of land in Whatcom County that are designated as Commercial Forestry (CF) with no residential development rights and another 3,832 acres designated Rural Forestry (RF) with approximately 182 gross residential development rights.

The GMA also requires the county to adopt and implement new climate change resiliency strategies under RCW 36.70.A.020(14), including strategies to mitigate impacts from natural hazards, including wildfires.

Given the anticipated increased threat of wildfires due to climate change, one resiliency strategy the county could take would be to reduce the potential for new residential development in

heavily forested areas sometimes referred to as the wildland urban interface or WUI. An initial approach to this issue could be to re-designate some publicly-owned RF lands to CF—thus removing the existing unexercised residential development rights associated with RF parcels on public lands where the management goals favor long-term commercial forest management—not future residential development. Such an approach would have multiple benefits: 1) by removing the potential for putting future growth in harm’s way; 2) reducing the potential for conversion of forest lands to non-forestry uses; 3) reducing the potential for land use conflicts with adjacent forest landowners; 4) reducing the potential for creating fire or safety hazards on adjacent forest lands; and 5) ensuring those lands remain viable for long-term commercial forestry management purposes as intended by the GMA.

The attached maps and spreadsheet indicate that the 3,832 acres of DNR-owned RF designated parcels in the county contain development rights for 182 potential dwelling units.

As part of the County’s state-mandated GMA update to its Comprehensive Plan, due in 2025, we would like to evaluate the concept of reclassifying DNR-owned parcels in Whatcom County from Rural Forestry (RF) to Commercial Forestry (CF) and we would like to request engagement and comment from the DNR on this issue at your earliest opportunity. Any changes to the Comprehensive Plan and changes in zoning are subject to Council review and approval.

2. In December of 2023, Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz announced that 2,000 acres of structurally complex state forestland proposed would be set aside for conservation as funded by the Climate Commitment Act, which included 650 acres in Whatcom. It is our understanding that replacement lands must be identified and that at least a portion of the replacement lands must be located in Whatcom County. The County is in the process of acquiring additional forestland acreage to promote active management to improve watershed health, build resilience to climate impacts, and contribute to the forestry economy. The County believes it would be beneficial to coordinate acquisitions and if possible, collaborate to maximize lands acquired in Whatcom County to achieve our shared goals and to ensure that local beneficiaries, including school districts, improve revenue forecasts.
3. Whatcom County is in the process of launching a Forest Resilience Task Force. Chris Hankey sits as the designated DNR representative on the Task Force. The task force will develop a Whatcom County forest resilience plan, which will include a framework for engagement with local, state, federal, and tribal governments and relevant stakeholders on issues relating to forest management and resilience. The forest resilience plan will use science- and evidence-based strategies and actions to sustain a thriving timber economy, restoring healthy forest ecosystems for fish and wildlife, addressing stream high and low flow issues, enhancing carbon sequestration and storage, promoting robust recreation opportunities, improving watershed health (including Lake Whatcom), improving wildfire, pest, and disease resistance, and increasing the overall resilience of Whatcom

County's forests to climate impacts. The plan will also include community values and desired outcomes to inform forest management plans for publicly owned forest lands.

Given that the product of this plan will likely provide input or direction to state land management, the County would like to allow for additional engagement with DNR staff and leadership as this planning process gets underway.

Please consider the above items and let us know how best to proceed with engagement.

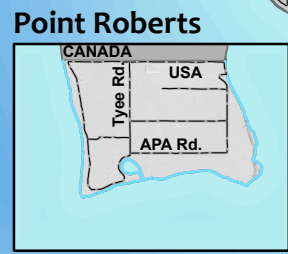
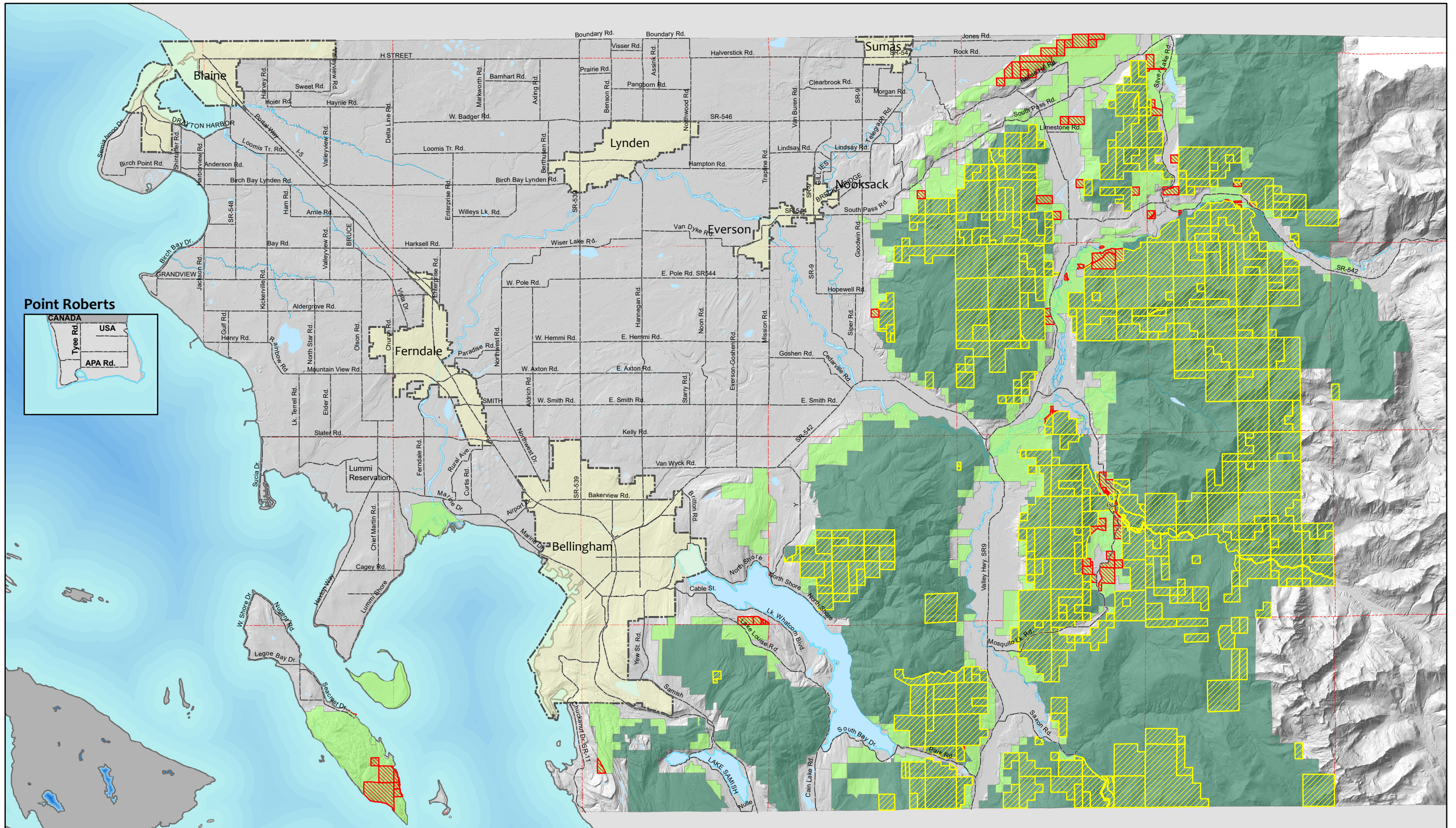
Thank you,



Satpal Singh Sidhu
County Executive

CC: Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy Executive, Whatcom County
Mark Personius, Director, Planning and Development Services, Whatcom County
Elizabeth Kosa, Director, Public Works, Whatcom County
Gary Stoyka, Natural Resources Manager, Public Works, Whatcom County
Chris Elder, Senior Planner, Public Works, Whatcom County
Whatcom County Council

Encl: DNR Ownership in Forestry Zones (Whatcom County Map)
DNR Rural Forestry Parcels in Whatcom County (Spreadsheet)



Whatcom County

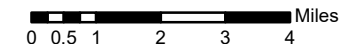
- DNR Ownership in Forestry Zones

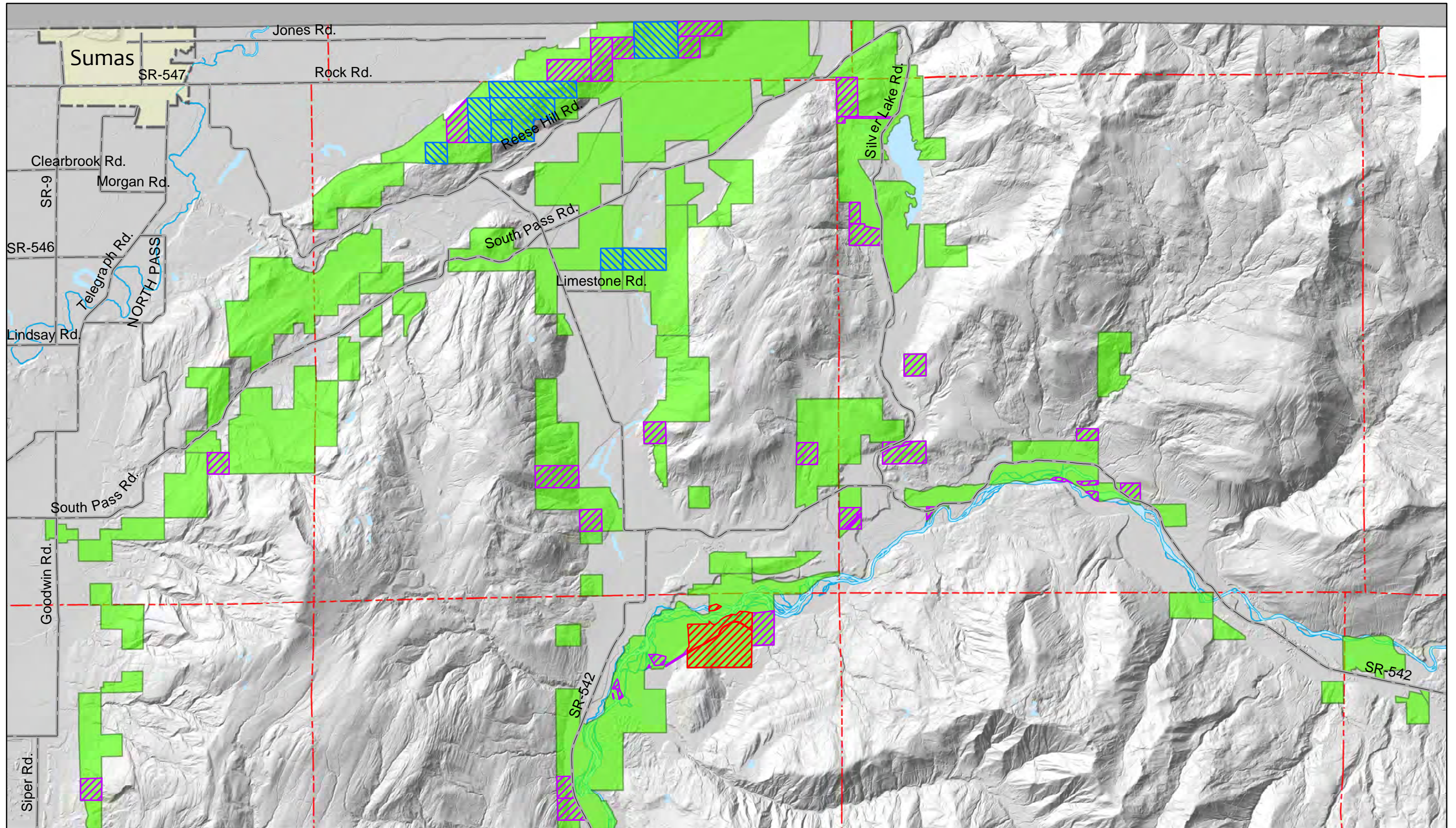
Legend

- Commercial Forestry Zoning
- Rural Forestry Zoning
- DNR Ownership/CF Zone (82,721 ac.)
- DNR Ownership/RF Zone (3,832 ac.)

USE OF WHATCOM COUNTY'S GIS DATA IMPLIES THE USER'S AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

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Whatcom County

- DNR Ownership in Rural Forestry Zone
South Pass/Mt. Baker Highway


Legend

 Rural Forestry Zoning

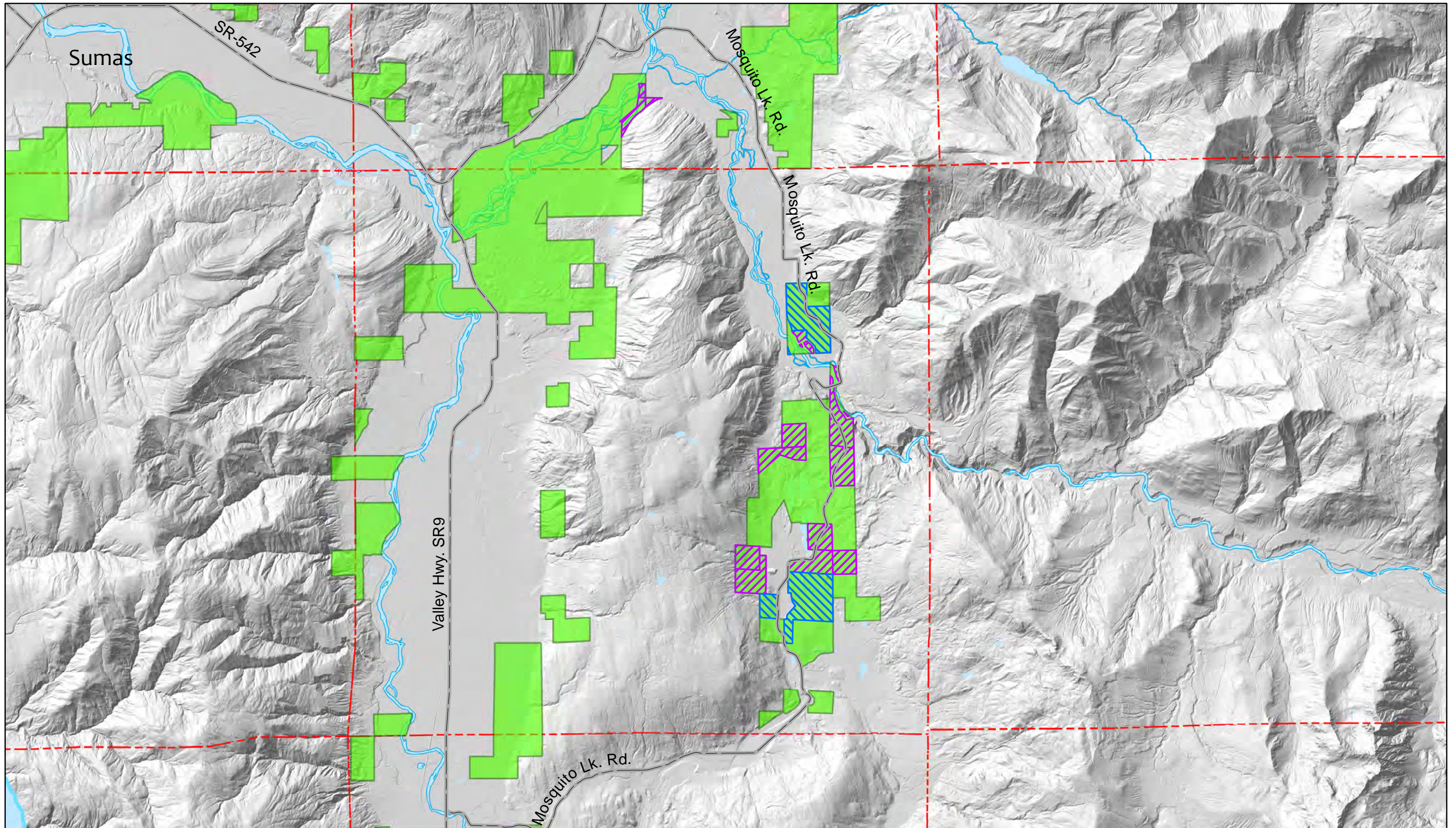
Gross Potential Buildout (DU)

 1-5  >10
 6-10

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 Miles
 00.176.35 0.7 1.05 1.4





Whatcom County

- DNR Ownership in Rural Forestry Zone
South Fork/Mosquito Lake

Legend

Rural Forestry Zoning

Gross Potential Buildout (DU)

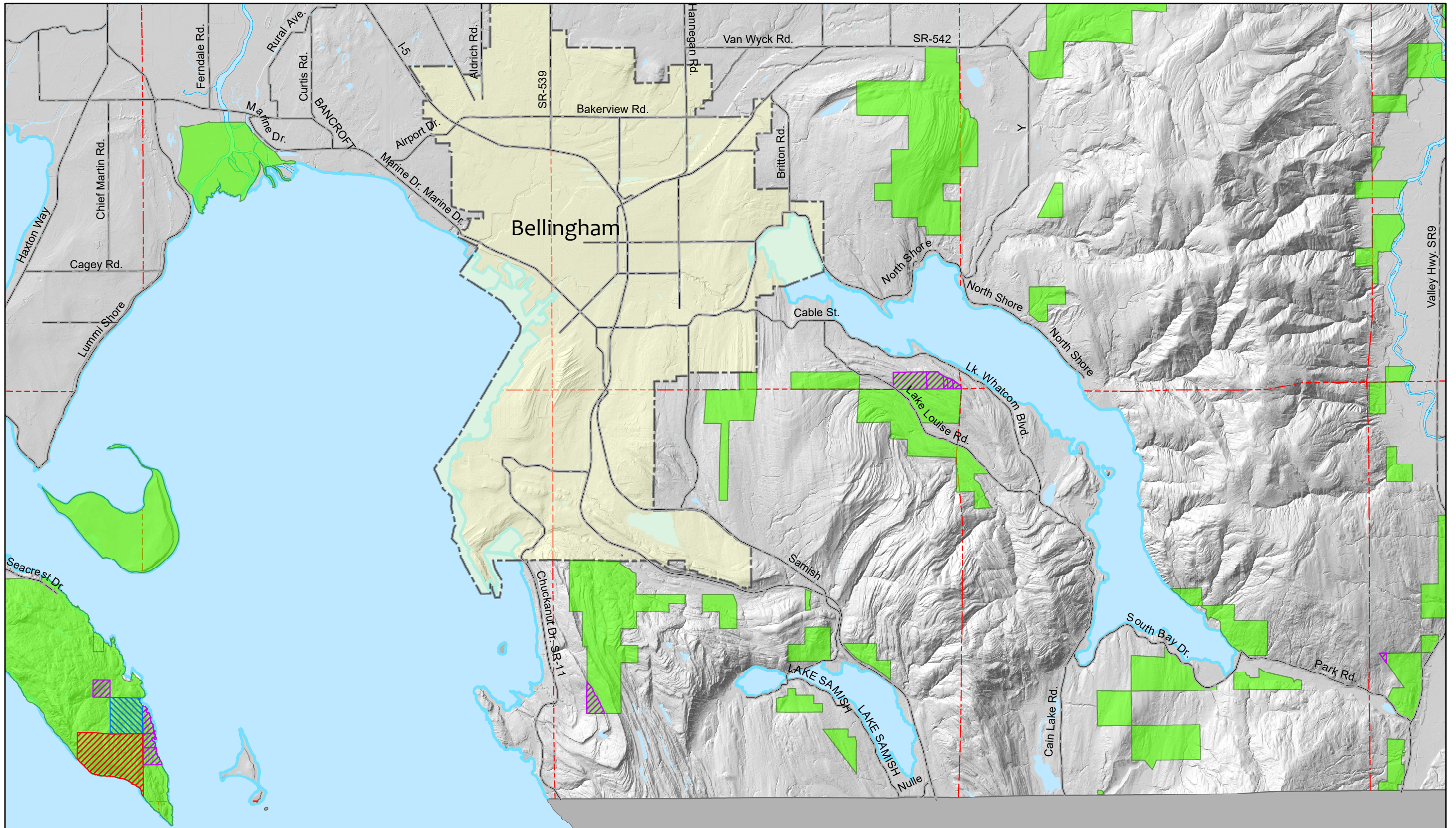
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0 0.150.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles





Whatcom County

- DNR Ownership in Rural Forestry Zone
Lummi Island/Lake Whatcom

Legend

 Rural Forestry Zoning

Gross Potential Buildout (DU)

 1-5  >10
 6-10

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0 0.228.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles





**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

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WWW.DNR.WA.GOV

October 28, 2024

Whatcom County Executive Sidhu
311 Grand Avenue
Suite 108
Bellingham, WA 98225-4082

Dear Executive Sidhu,

Thank you for your July 8, 2024, letter expressing your desire to engage with the DNR to ensure forests in Whatcom County are managed well and a sustainable forest products industry is maintained. It is essential that this focus is maintained in all our conversations, work groups and task force efforts. Decision making in forest and wildfire management is complex and requires careful consideration and discussion. DNR leadership and staff are eager to provide expertise and feedback on the three items you have addressed.

Rezoning of DNR-owned Parcels from Rural Forestry to Commercial Forestry

As you state in your letter, the Growth Management Act (GMA), requires counties to adopt comprehensive plans and development regulations that designate and conserve forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance.

“Such regulations shall assure that the use of lands adjacent to... forest... resource lands shall not interfere with the continued use, in the accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices, of these designated lands for the production of food, agricultural products, or timber, or for the extraction of minerals.”

RCW 36.70A.060. DNR is supportive of the policies that Whatcom County has included in its current Comprehensive Plan Goal 8G: “Support increasing Whatcom County's working forest land base and support policies that do not adversely impact the commercial forest land base.” These policies acknowledge the importance of recognizing the diversity of ownerships and uses of forest lands through separate land use designations of Rural Forestry and Commercial Forestry. The plan recommends implementation of “land use policies that recognize the multiple values of working forests and respect the rights and responsibilities of private and public forest landowners.”

DNR is concerned, however, that the County’s proposed reclassification of forested state trust lands managed by DNR would not achieve the County’s stated goals, but would reduce the value of the trust lands, risking harm to the trust beneficiaries for whom the state manages the subject lands. In addition, singling out DNR managed lands from other similarly situated lands in private ownership, by down-zoning only DNR managed lands from Rural Forestry to Commercial Forestry, is a problematic approach to zoning. DNR wants to work with the County to achieve the County’s goals through other, more effective means.



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DNR Northwest Region Management has extensive experience in managing the interactions between forestry and nearby residents. Based on this experience, we can assert that eliminating the transitional zoning between commercial and residential areas would likely intensify land use conflicts rather than reduce them. Rural Forestry Zoning provides an important buffer that mitigates potential conflicts between commercial forestry operations and residential communities.

Additionally, Rural Forestry zoning:

- Allows landowners to engage in a variety of diverse economic activities, such as small-scale timber production which supports local economies by providing employment opportunities for small communities. This develops and maintains a labor pool for larger commercial forestry activities.
- Provides a framework that accommodates various land uses and activities, fostering a resilient and adaptable rural landscape.
- Allows for a mix of forested areas and small-scale agricultural activities, which can support a greater variety of plant and animal species vital to forestry operations.
- Provides landowners with greater flexibility in how they use their land, allowing for a balance between conservation and economic use.
- Supports conservation initiatives and incentive programs aimed at protecting forested lands and promoting sustainable practices and can often be the where innovative practices are designed and implemented.
- Provides diverse land use options which can help maintain or increase property values, as Rural Forestry areas often attract buyers for a wide breadth of opportunities.
- Helps preserve the rural character and lifestyle of communities, which can be an important aspect of local culture and heritage.
- Provides a greater tax base that funds rural services, including rural fire districts that are often staffed by volunteers that live on or near rural forest lands and have vested interest in participating and protecting.
- Offers a balanced approach to forest land use that supports environmental sustainability, economic diversity, social well-being, and effective land use planning.

As demonstrated, Rural Forestry zoning provides significant benefits to Whatcom County by enhancing environmental, economic, and human health and safety.

Currently, DNR has no direct plans to transact the forested state trust lands zoned Rural Forestry. The State is committed to fulfilling its fiduciary duty to generate revenue from trust properties. From time to time, however, DNR will purchase, sell, and trade properties to better meet this duty. The County's proposed down-zoning of forested state trust lands would result in an estimated loss in real property value of \$26,824,000 and restrict future transaction flexibility. Instead of this problematic approach, DNR proposes a strategic review of land ownership within specific landscapes to assess wildfire risks and identify targeted measures that protect citizens, properties, and firefighters. The 2024 amendments to RCW 19.27.560 supports this approach by effectively enhancing building codes to mitigate wildfire hazards, consistent with the State and County's interest. RCW 19.27.560 helps mitigate wildfire hazards



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by requiring the adoption of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) in Washington State. This code sets standards for building construction in areas where urban development meets wildlands, commonly referred to as the wildland-urban interface (WUI). By enforcing stricter building regulations, such as the use of fire-resistant materials, defensible space around structures, and access for emergency vehicles, the code reduces the risk of wildfire damage to properties and enhances the safety of residents and first responders in these high-risk areas.

While your letter is currently only proposing redesignating state trust lands from Rural Forestry to Commercial Forestry, the logic behind this approach must apply to all lands zoned Rural Forestry in all ownerships, and not just the state's lands. Among other things, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties to ensure that comprehensive plans foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards. Inconsistent zoning changes by the County will not serve this end. Nor will the County's proposal protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety as required by the GMA. The loss of the benefits listed above on all or a large portion of Rural Forestry lands would come at a significant cost to the forest land, citizens and trust assets in Whatcom County, without fostering resiliency.

DNR is Washington state's largest wildfire fighting force, with more than 1,300 employees trained and available to fight fires as needed. In our updated Plan for Climate Resilience, we provide strategies to reduce human-caused wildfire ignitions and address increasing wildfire risk in the WUI. A key strategy includes enhancing and sustaining our wildfire workforce by adding year-round fire prevention staff, increasing seasonal staff, and expanding our firefighting assets to bolster our response capabilities.

Another strategy is our Wildfire Ready Neighbors (WRN) initiative. This new DNR initiative focuses on increasing community resistance in the face of ever-increasing wildfire danger. It utilizes social marketing to drive community awareness and interest helping them to better prepare their homes and small, private forests for wildfire. The initiative also harnesses existing community partners such as local fire districts, conservation districts, and non-profit organizations to add capacity to DNR forces to complete home and forest wildfire assessments.

In addition to the WRN initiative, DNR has a land-owner assistance program that pays for 50-100% of the cost of conducting fuels-reduction around homes in the WUI. DNR is interested in working collaboratively with the county to promote these programs to all citizens who could benefit from them.

The zoning approach Whatcom County proposes removes a small human presence at a significant financial cost to DNR's trust beneficiaries without effectively addressing the core factors driving climate-induced wildfire hazards. This approach fails to mitigate the primary risks associated with wildfires, which require comprehensive strategies focused on reducing ignition sources, improving land management, and enhancing firefighting capabilities. Instead of costly and ineffective zoning changes, efforts should be directed toward solutions that genuinely reduce wildfire risk and protect both the land and the trust beneficiaries' interests.



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Climate Commitment Act Replacement Lands in Whatcom County

As is explained above, DNR is always interested in improving our ability to manage our lands. The Climate Commitment Act proposal is a great example of how we do this and the value we will receive for replacing these forest lands is in part determined by the zoning. We can purchase more than three acres of Commercial Forestry replacement lands for one acre of Rural Forestry land based on bare land value alone. We would be interested to learn about what acquisitions Whatcom County is working on and to see if we can collaborate to meet our goals. At your convenience, please contact our Transactions Manager, Cory McDonald, for a meeting to discuss in more detail.

Engagement With DNR Staff and Leadership

DNR would appreciate a balanced conversation that allows staff to ensure Whatcom County elected officials and staff members understand DNR protections and mitigations when issues are raised. Most of the specific concerns from advocacy groups and community members are quite nuanced and require significant effort to ensure a common understanding. When DNR management actions are opposed, it harms the trust beneficiaries, climate enhancing resource management, the forest products industry, tax revenues for the county, and many of the junior taxing districts. We are pleased that a focus of the Task Force is to develop a framework for engagement with DNR and others on issues related to forest management and resilience. DNR needs county support for our management of trust lands which has some of the strongest and most effective resource protection measures in the country under our state Forest Practices rules, Habitat Conservation Plan, and Policy for Sustainable Forests.

The DNR currently has three staff members on the Forest Resilience Task Force that are eager to give input and share their expertise. While we are unsure what the final product of this effort will look like we are interested in providing as much support as we can. Our core work requires that we prioritize our resources so that we can ensure we meet our obligations. We will be receiving feedback and updates throughout this planning process and will utilize Chris Hankey to report back to Whatcom County and the Task Force with any input we need to add.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Guthrie".

Jay Guthrie
Northwest Region Manger
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Jay.guthrie@dnr.wa.gov
360-856-3500



HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

Northwest Region

JUNIA TIMBER SALE

Region: **Northwest**

County: **Whatcom**

District: **Baker**

Unit: **Hamilton**

Planned BNR meeting: **December 3, 2024**

Planned auction date: **January 29, 2025**

FPA Classification: **III**

General Location



HARVEST UNIT DETAILS

Unit	Acres	Harvest Type	Stand Origin	Stand Dev. Stage
1	42	VRH	1945 - 1954 70-80 years old	Biomass Accumulation/ Stem Exclusion

Sale Specifics

HCP Planning Unit: **North Puget**

Planning Unit

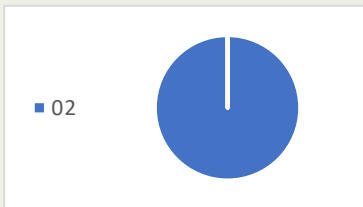
Management Block: **Galbraith**

Mountain

Sale Type: **Lump Sum**

Volume: **1,489 mbf**

Trust Distribution



Conservation Facts

Original planned area: **46 ac**

Final harvest area: **42 ac**

Conserved area: **4 ac**

Percent contributed to Long-term forest cover: **10%**

Notable Protected Features

Streams, Wetlands, FP rule identified landforms, Recreation Trails

Certifications

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

DESCRIPTION OF SALE

The Junia timber sale consists of one 42-acre Variable Retention Harvest (VRH) unit within a 50-acre parcel of state trust land surrounded by privately owned timberlands. Timber sales and leases on this parcel produce revenue for the State Forest Purchase (02) trust. The revenue is distributed between Whatcom County (26.5%), the State General Fund (23.5%), and the DNR Forest Development Account (50%).

The VRH unit comprises a mixed conifer stand dominated by Douglas-fir with a codominant cohort of western redcedar and minor components of western hemlock and red alder. A significant portion of the unit contains high levels of mortality in the Douglas-fir, likely caused by a fungal pathogen. Much of the sale area has tight canopy closure and very little understory vegetation. Where present, understory vegetation species composition varies based on site conditions. Dry sites on the ridges and near the stand edges contain salal, Oregon grape, and baldhip rose. Wet sites on north-facing slopes and in swales contain vine maple and devils club. Sword fern, salmonberry, red huckleberry, and elderberry are found throughout the sale area. The average tree diameter at breast height (DBH) is around 18", with a high proportion of smaller stems of western redcedar. The largest diameter class of Douglas-fir, between 30" and 40" DBH, have been retained as scattered leave trees where operations and safety allow. Leave trees were selected to provide biological legacy, retain wildlife habitat, and for visual appeal.



Co-dominant WRC in canopy with Douglas-fir



Scant understory, self-pruning



Douglas-fir mortality with emerging understory cohort

OLD GROWTH ASSESSMENT

This area was harvested completely by the early 1940's as evidenced by the historical ortho photo record. No old growth assessment was conducted. The stand is almost entirely a single 70-80 year old cohort of Douglas fir with a co-dominant cohort of western redcedar. A core sampler was used to count tree rings on a selection of dominant stems within the stand, and no trees older than 100 years old were found.

Using the *Key to Stand Development Stages* in the DNR publication, [Identifying Mature and Old Forests in Western Washington](#) (Van Pelt 2007, 46-47) most of the sale area is classified as a single cohort stand in the Biomass accumulation/stem exclusion stage of development. Scattered areas within the stand key out to the Maturation I stage due to understory development following high mortality in the dominant Douglas-fir.

CONSERVATION AREAS

Approximately 12 acres of the Junia timber sale lie within the Lake Whatcom watershed. Prescriptions for timber harvest and road construction have been applied in accordance with the Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan (LWLP), for which the LWLP Inter-Jurisdictional Committee was consulted. A seasonal restriction on operations within the watershed will be in place from Nov. 1 – March 31 to reduce soil impacts during wet weather. Around 3 acres of trust land within the Lake Whatcom watershed containing a forested wetland and no-harvest wetland management zone have been retained as long-term forest cover.

In addition to the eight leave trees per acre required for retention for wildlife habitat and biological legacy by the DNR State lands Habitat Conservation Plan, one additional leave tree per acre has been retained to improve aesthetic value and recreation user experience of the parcel.

PUBLIC USE BENEFIT

The sale area contains two miles of DNR-designated non-motorized recreational trails. These trails, along with the DNR-maintained roads, are part of a heavily trafficked trail system called Galbraith Mountain containing over 65 miles of non-motorized trails across 3000 acres of privately and publicly owned land. The timber sale contract aims to protect trails by limiting equipment impacts during operations and rehabilitate trails by clearing debris following the harvest. New road construction and post-haul road maintenance will improve non-motorized routes within the trail system. NW region staff will work with the operator and Whatcom Mountain Bike Coalition, our non-profit trail management partner, to post signage and conduct public outreach regarding trail closures during harvest operations.

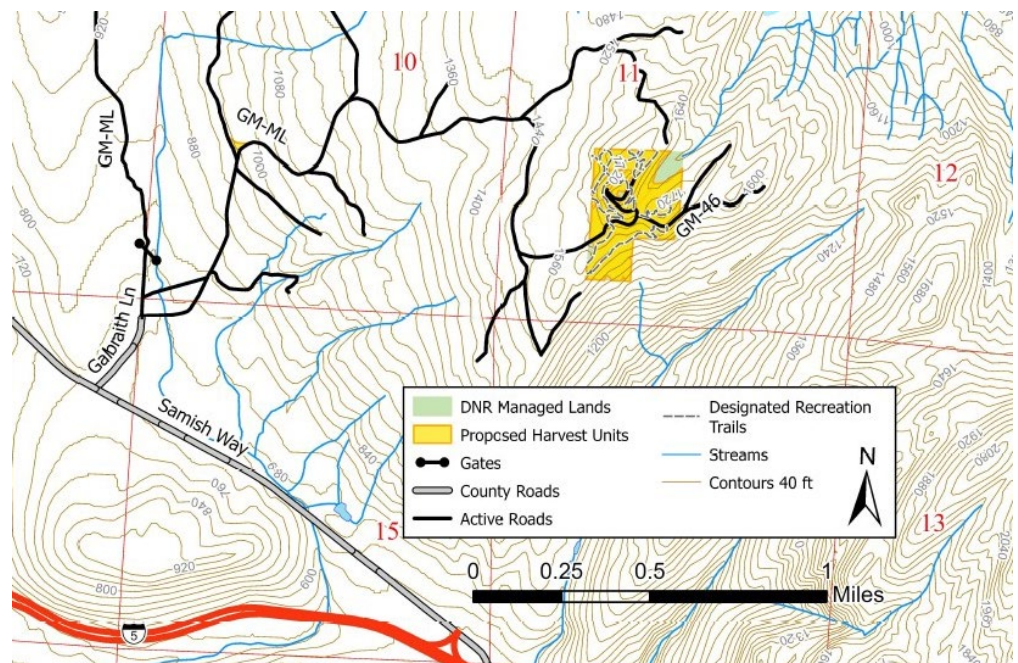
COMMUNICATION LEASE SITES

Four communication tower lease sites are present within the timber sale area. The lease sites provide a significant and diversified income source for this parcel but require considerations for access and transmission paths. Contract language includes maintaining access to the tower sites for leaseholder designees during timber sale operations. Several potential landing locations have been restricted from tower operations due to potential interference with microwave beam paths. Ensuring uninterrupted transmission for all three tower sites requires removing tall trees from transmission corridors while the surrounding stand is in a mature status. This timber sale will allow for many years of uninterrupted transmission while the new stand grows.

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Variable retention harvest (VRH) is a type of ecological forestry that employs even-aged management while maintaining continuity in structure, function, and composition between forest generations by retention of structures as large and old live trees, snags, and logs. Following harvest, VRH portions of the timber sale area will be planted to a density of 360 trees per acre with a mix of conifer species which may include Douglas-fir, western redcedar, western hemlock, noble fir, and white pine. Areas with high Douglas-fir mortality will be replanted with species less susceptible to Douglas-fir pathogens. Where operations allow, non-merchantable shade-tolerant trees will be retained to shelter the new stand from environmental impacts and to develop stand structure.

LANDSCAPE VIEW



Inter-Jurisdictional Committee for Implementing the Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan

Steve Fox - Aubrey Stargell - Curt Veldhuisen (chair) - Tom Westergreen - Dick Whitmore

DATE: August 29, 2024

MEMO TO: Finnegan Hopper - DNR State Lands Management

SUBJECT: IJC review of proposed Junia Timber Sale

This memo summarizes the results of the Inter-Jurisdictional Committee's (IJC) review of the DNR's proposed Junia Timber Sale. The Junia harvest is a single unit located along the southwestern boundary of the Lake Whatcom watershed on Lookout Mountain. Of the 43 total acres that make up the Junia proposal, only the twelve acres that are within the Lake Whatcom Watershed were the subject of this IJC review.

As you will recall, the field visit was conducted on August 20 and included five IJC members listed in the box above and four DNR foresters: you, Tyson Whiteid, Chris Hankey and Stefan Shelton. We appreciate you providing the IJC with summary information and maps prior to the meeting, including the unit maps and IJC Checklist for the sale, and assisting the IJC with the field visit. From the documentation and site discussion, we understand the following:

1. **Acreage:** As stated above, 12 acres of Junia (29%) drain toward Lake Whatcom via Beaver and Austin Creeks. Most will be harvested using variable retention harvest and three acres are within a 100-foot-wide no-cut wetland buffer.
2. **Streams and wetlands** were typed using the DNR Trust Forestland HCP Water Typing System (i.e. Types 1-5). There is a forested wetland that DNR estimates to be 0.6 acre that will remain uncut along with a 100-foot buffer. There is a non-fish Type 4 or 5 channel that flows from the downstream end of the wetland, near where it exits the Junia boundary. DNR verified that there are no other channels in the Lake Whatcom portion of the Junia harvest.
3. **Slope analysis:** Junia was reviewed by a licensed engineering geologist employed by DNR. Findings were transmitted orally to DNR foresters, and IJC understands that no report was necessary given the minimal geologic hazards present.
4. **Inner Gorges:** DNR flagged out a small "bedrock hollow" (~1/4 acre) south of the wetland buffer, described further below.
5. **Existing Roads:** Most haul roads are outside the Lake Whatcom Watershed and all will be upgraded for the operation. All road construction and hauling use is seasonally restricted from November through March.

6. **New Road Construction:** The Junia plan includes a new 691-foot spur identified as GM-4601. Roughly half of the spur length is within the Lake Whatcom Watershed, but has no stream crossings that would allow sediment delivery to surface channels. This spur will be abandoned after logging is complete.
7. **Hydrologic Change:** The 12-acres being harvested within the Lake Whatcom Watershed is entirely within the Rain-dominated elevation zone which is minimally responsive to rain-on-snow enhancement.
8. **Harvest Methods:** Junia is proposed to be logged using a mix of ground-based and cable yarding systems, based on steepness and operator preference. Logging operations will have the same seasonal restrictions as road use, as described above under topic 5.
9. **Timber Volume:** The Junia sale is estimated to produce 1.35 million board feet, so IJC estimates that approximately 0.39 million board feet would come from the Lake Whatcom portion (assuming 29%). DNR notes: “There are no additional FY 2025 VRH sales planned within the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Area, and this volume is well below the 6.1 million board feet average annual harvest limit included in the FEIS.”
10. **Green Trees/Wildlife:** The harvest area will contain standing green leaf trees at a density of 9.1 trees per acre in clumps and individual trees. DNR specifies that, “Leave tree areas were designed to encourage the retention of existing snags, cavity trees and snag recruits.”
11. **Harvest Visibility:** DNR indicates that, “Portions of this proposal are located in areas rated as moderately visible. This harvest will be visible from Interstate 5 and Bellingham. Riparian areas and dispersed leaf trees will help obscure the harvest area.” IJC notes that the most visible portions of Junia are outside the jurisdiction of the Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan.
12. **Cultural/Tribal:** DNR reports that, “This area was field reviewed by a cultural resource technician and no significant resources were found in or around this proposal. Screening tools include GLO maps, historic USGS maps, 1940’s aerial photographs, DAHP records, and consultation with local tribes.” The IJC further notes that local tribes will be notified again when the Forest Practices Application is processed.
13. **Non-timber revenue generation:** The Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan includes “Objective 15 - Maintain and increase lease revenue from existing and future communication sites.” The Junia project contains an active communication tower and DNR will continue to lease tower space. DNR points out that “road construction will improve access to existing tower sites and create new access to unused potential tower sites”.

The IJC walked portions of the Junia proposal, starting at the cell tower and dropping to the buffered wetland, the only water body in the proposal. The wetland was delineated during the wet season and likely exceeds the area that is saturated into the ‘growing season’, a criteria for regulated wetlands. From there, we walked southward to review the “bedrock hollow” and continued along the proposed GM-4601 spur. The IJC noted that the “bedrock hollow” falls short of the criteria specified in the Washington Forest Practices Rules (WAC 222-16-050 (1)(d)(i)(A)) because there is no channel and slopes

below are too gentle for landslide propagation. Although it would not legally require buffering, this location is well-suited to meeting DNRs green tree requirements documented in topic 10 above.

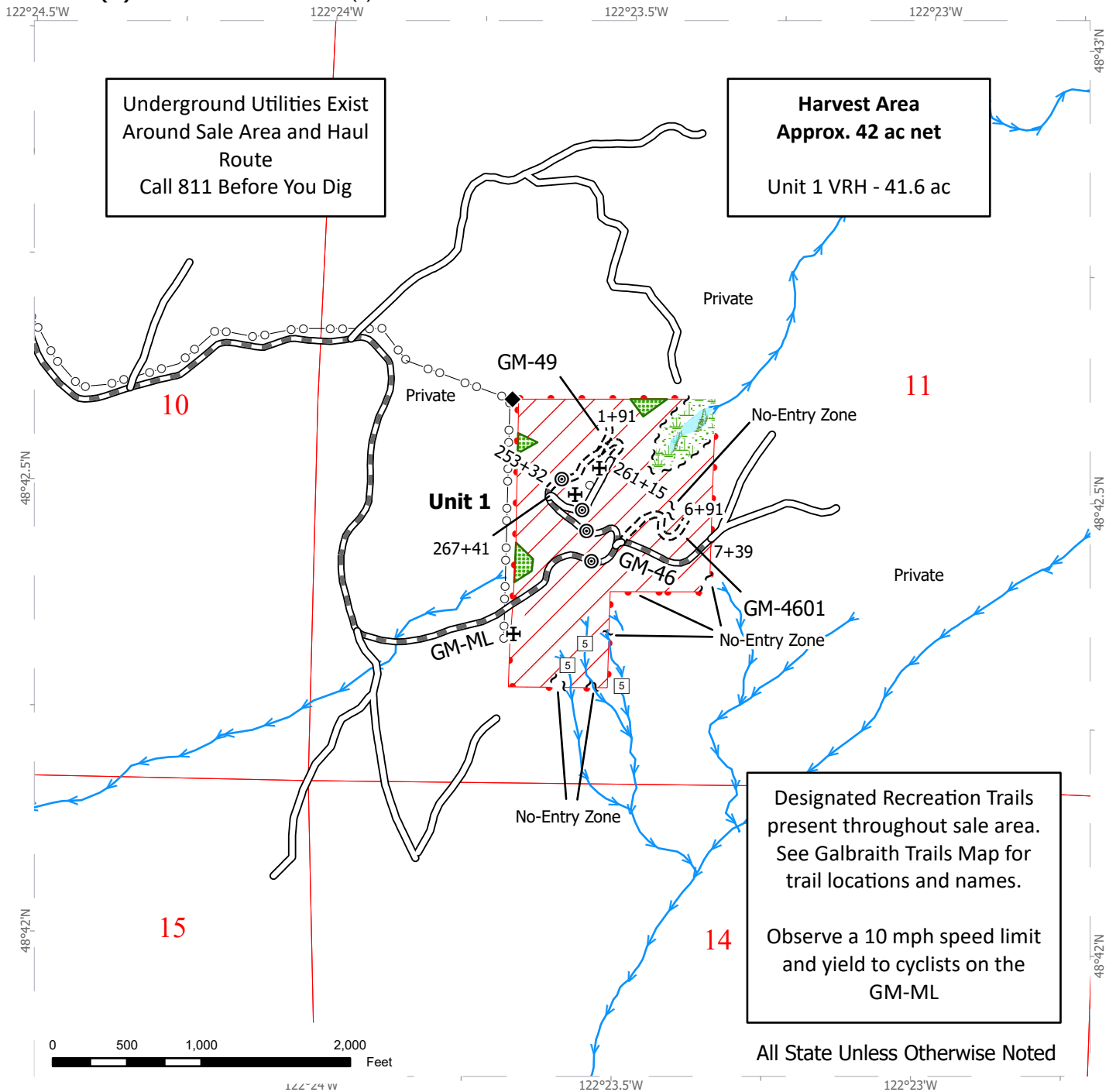
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

The IJC concluded that the Junia proposal is low risk because the acreage to be harvested in the Watershed is small (12 acres) and the single water body (a forested wetland) is well delineated and buffered from logging, road construction and other types of disturbance and potential sediment generation. All IJC members thus concluded that the Junia proposal, as described above, meets or exceeds the intent of the Lake Whatcom Landscape Plan.

TIMBER SALE MAP

SALE NAME: JUNIA
AGREEMENT #: 30-106667
TOWNSHIP(S): T37R3E
TRUST(S): State Forest Purchase (2)

REGION: Northwest Region
COUNTY(S): Whatcom
ELEVATION RGE: 1400-1760



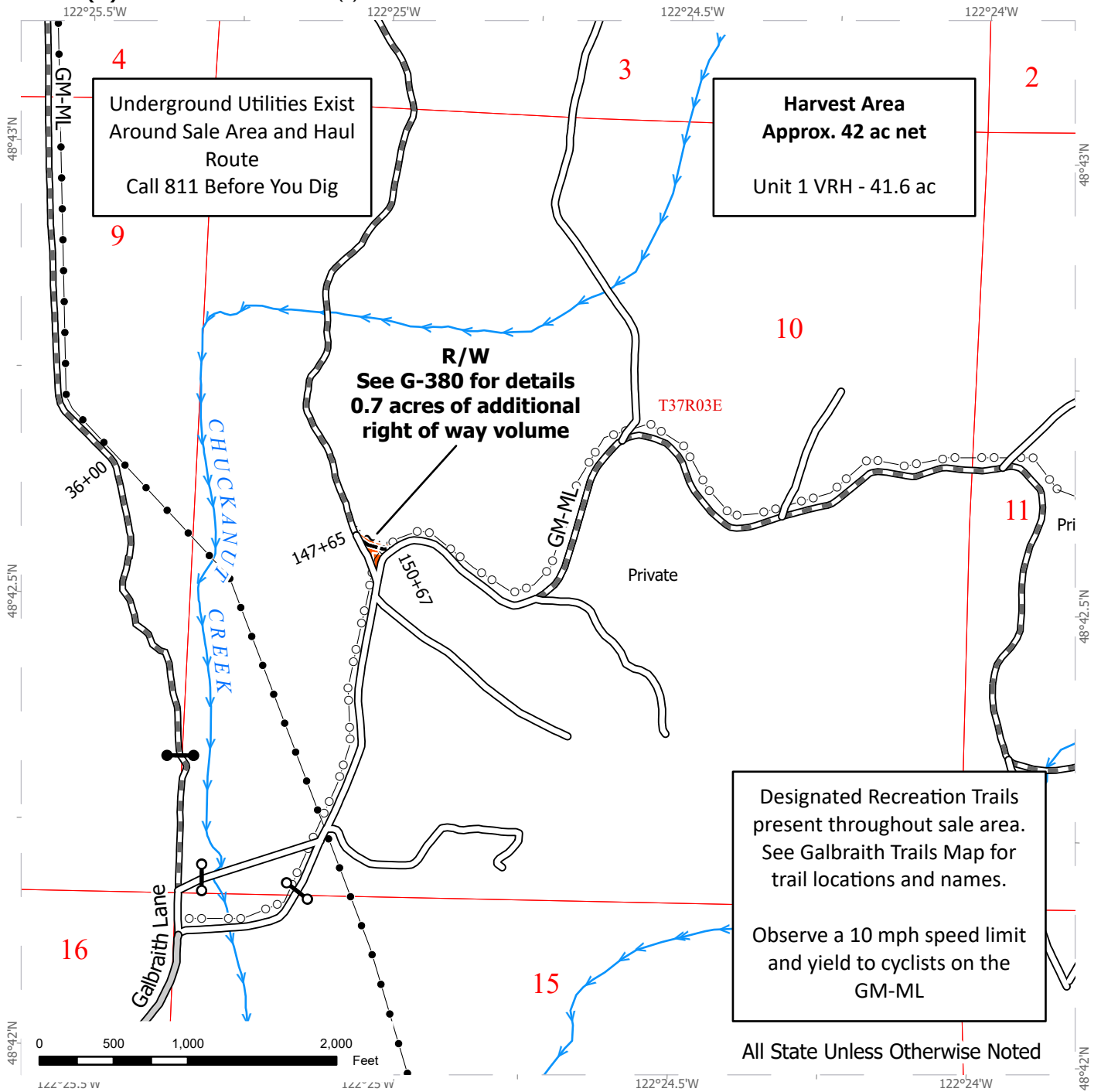
All State Unless Otherwise Noted

Variable Retention Harvest	Existing Roads	Streams
Leave Tree Area	Required Construction	Stream Type
Forested Wetland	Required Pre-Haul Maintenance	Stream Break
Wetland Mgt Zone	Power Lines	Communication Tower
Sale Boundary Tags		Equipment Limitation Zone
Property Line		Survey Monument

TIMBER SALE MAP

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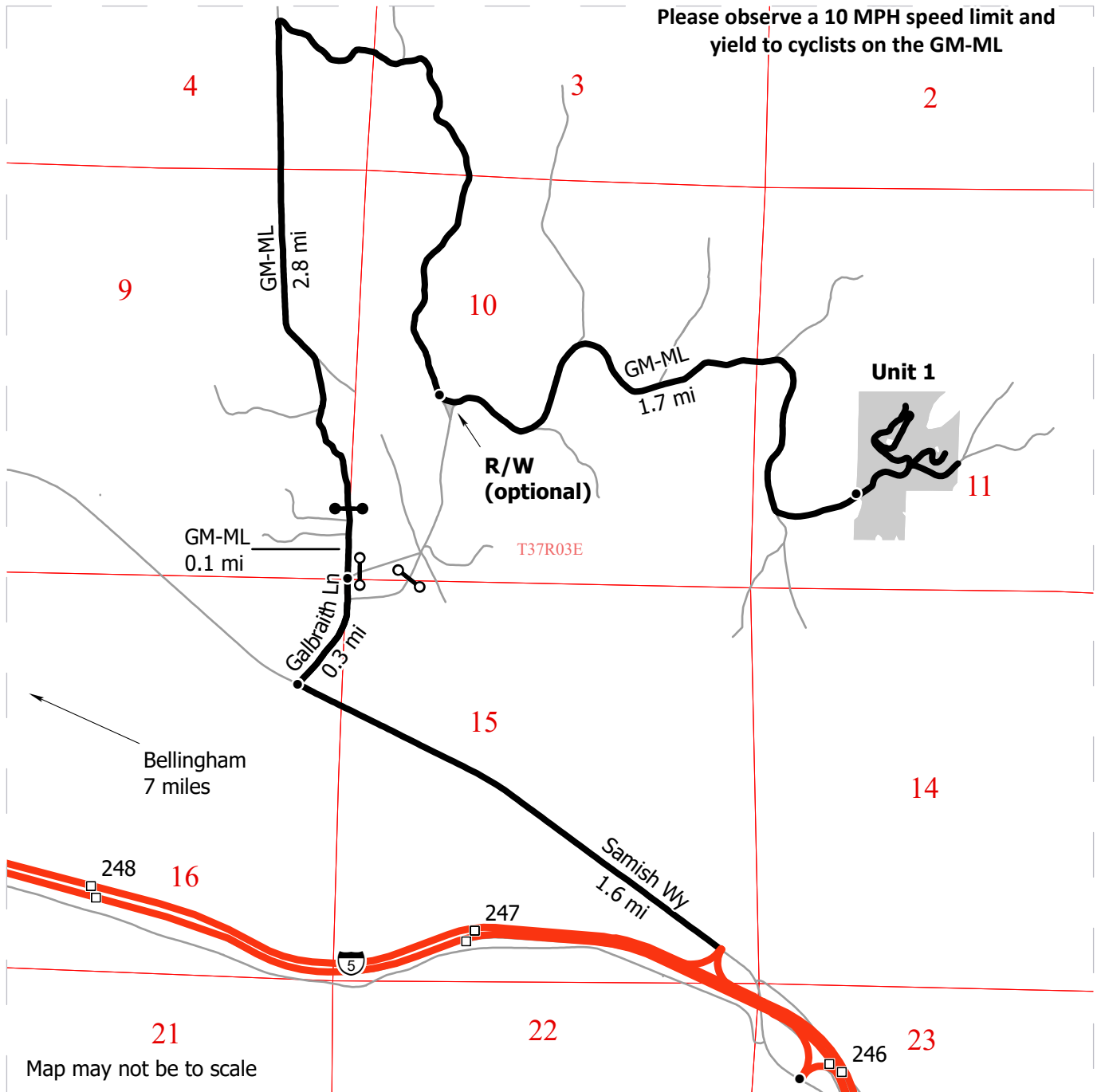
Right-of-Way Harvest	County Road	Streams
Right of Way Tags	Existing Roads	Stream Type
	Optional Construction	Stream Break
	Required Pre-Haul Maintenance	Gate (F1-3)
	Pipeline	Gate (Private)
	Power Lines	



DRIVING MAP

SALE NAME: JUNIA
AGREEMENT #: 30-106667
TOWNSHIP(S): T37R3E
TRUST(S): State Forest Purchase (2)

REGION: Northwest Region
COUNTY(S): Whatcom
ELEVATION RGE: 1400-1760



- Harvest Unit
- Highway
- Haul Route
- Other Route
- Milepost Marker
- Distance Indicator
- Gate (F1-3)
- Gate (Private)

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From Exit 246 on I5, drive west on Samish Way for 1.6 miles. Turn right onto Galbraith Lane and drive 0.3 miles to start on the GM-ML. Drive for 0.1 miles to reach the gate (F1-3). Continue on the GM-ML for 2.8 miles to reach the R/W unit. Turn left to continue on the GM-ML and drive 1.7 miles to enter Unit 1. See Road plan for driving directions to Macadamia rock pit.

Access via the Non-Easement Route is not held by the DNR.

