

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Mark McCauley, County Administrator

FROM: Heidi Eisenhour, Commissioner

DATE: November 7, 2022

SUBJECT: DNR Carbon Project Phase II – Jefferson County parcels

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has launched an outreach process to gather feedback on proposed parcels that will be included in the 10,000 acres of state lands set aside for conservation and carbon sequestration in Western Washington including Jefferson County. At the time of the project was announced, the agency had identified the first 2,500 acres of forests to be set aside with none of those being in Jefferson County. For Phase 2, DNR has identified 50 parcels totaling 11,726 acres as candidates for the remaining 7,500 acres for inclusion, including a number in Jefferson County.

DNR is using High Conservation Value (HCV) criteria to guide their selection of potential parcels to include in the carbon project. The criteria were developed for, and are used by, forest certification systems to help identify areas where specific values are present in the forested landscape that merit special attention in the context of natural resource management. DNR already carefully accounts for these values in our policies and practices, but forest areas remain with some of these special features and/or with high potential to sequester and store carbon. It is on these potential areas that DNR focused its selection of the Phase II candidate parcels for inclusion in the carbon project.

The HCV criteria include:

- Significant concentrations of biodiversity;
- Significant landscape-scale ecosystems;
- Rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems and habitats;
- Basic ecosystem services in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control);
- Areas or resources fundamental to meeting basic needs of Indigenous populations and local communities (e.g. subsistence); and
- Areas or resources critical to Indigenous populations and local communities' traditional cultural identity.

DNR also considered other attributes of forests, including areas of older, mature forests, Special Ecological Features (as described in the Policy for Sustainable Forests), including rare plant communities that are not already deferred, areas adjacent to other conservation areas, stands brought to our attention by concerned citizens, and more. Many of these additional considerations also overlap with the HCV criteria in some way.

ANALYSIS:

Since DNR announced in Carbon Project earlier this year, we have expressed interest in learning more about the Carbon Project and for some of our forests being considered for inclusion in the project as it unfolded. DNR, as part of Phase II of this project, has released a set of maps of [parcels being considered for inclusion including in Jefferson County](#). Some of the parcels included in the Jefferson County map are known local priorities for different management based on values included in the parcel. Others are not. We have asked a set of DNR leaders to join us to give us a briefing on Phase II of the Carbon Project, explain the selection of parcels included in Jefferson County and share any updated information on the fiscal implications of this proposal to beneficiaries in Jefferson County.

Here is a breakdown of the parcels with acreage for the Jefferson County map linked above:

<u>Jefferson County total</u>	<u>3,911</u>		
Anderson Lake	435	North Penny	174
Beaver Valley 3	66	North Penny 2	48
Coyle	358	Penny South	370
Coyle 1	27	Quimper	50
Coyle 3	38	Silent Alder	537
Coyle Unit 4	119	Silent Lake	425
Duckabush 2	12	Teal Lake	401
Mt Walker	851		

We've received a number of specific questions on topics ranging from the fiscal impact to beneficiaries of the Carbon Project, what public access to carbon project parcels for hunting and foraging would be, seeking information about the characteristics of various of these parcels, and if any of these parcels would be considered for Trust Land Transfer if not included in the Carbon Project. We look forward to the opportunity to talk with our DNR colleagues about these and other issues.

Following this session our next scheduled opportunity for an in-depth discussion on this issue will be at our November 30th public workshop at the Jefferson County Library from 5-7PM. We will focus on a discussion of and getting input on forest management options and their implications in Jefferson County, including carbon offsets. We will be inviting a diverse set of stakeholders to that session including members of the DNR team, other relevant elected officials and senior staff, tribes, junior taxing districts, and subject matter experts from the conservation, forest products and recreation industries.

FISCAL IMPACT:

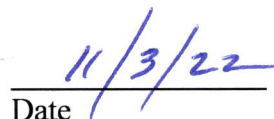
None. This is an informational session.

RECOMMENDATION:

Listen, ask questions, learn.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator


Date