

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR AGENDA REQUEST**

TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Mark McCauley, County Administrator
DATE: July 8, 2024
SUBJECT: Briefing: Jefferson County Forestry Strategic Plan

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

On February 5, 2024, Jefferson County entered into a 5-year contract with Chickadee Forestry to continue development of the County's Sustainable Forestry Program. One of the early tasks required in the professional services agreement was the development of a Sustainable Forestry Program Strategic Plan.

ANALYSIS:

Today's briefing will share the strategic plan in its current form and will invite feedback and guidance from the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners.

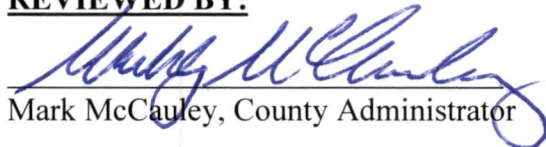
FISCAL IMPACT:

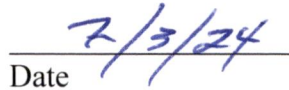
This request has no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Listen to the briefing, ask questions and provide guidance.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator


Date



CHICKADEE
FORESTRY



Jefferson County Sustainable Forestry Program 5 Year Strategic Plan Working Draft

Working Document, July 1, 2024

Malloree Weinheimer, Chickadee Forestry

Katrina Amaral, Timberdoodle Consulting

Introduction

Jefferson County is a rural county on the Olympic Peninsula. The majority of the people are located on the eastern side of the Olympic National Park and while Port Townsend is the main population center, towns like Quilcene, Brinnon, Chimacum, and Port Hadlock support a significant portion of the county industry. Historic economic success has depended on timber and fishing; the Port Townsend Paper Mill remains the largest private employer in the county.

The timber industry has been significantly impacted by the 2008 recession and the general consolidation of industrial landowners and sawmills. With evolving economic needs and a greater understanding of fire risk and healthy ecosystem dynamics in the face of climate change, it is a relevant time to consider the role of the local timber economy and forest management on county lands.

Despite the important role of PT Paper within the local timber economy, there is an overall lack of small operators throughout the supply chain. Not only does this lack of independent loggers, truckers, and sawyers impact the resiliency of the timber economy in Jefferson county, it also fails to provide the public with an understanding of alternatives to industrial forest management. As such, there is significant pushback and misunderstanding of both the environmental and economic benefits to ecologically appropriate harvests.

Much like the efforts surrounding agriculture in Jefferson County, a solution to a sustainable forest economy is to “make working lands within [the county] productive and profitable,

thus ensuring their long term viability”. This Strategic Plan lays out a pathway to create a self-sustaining forestry program for Jefferson County that centers the future of both the environment and the community.

Vision Statement

In 25 years, Jefferson County’s land stewardship is a thriving, financially self-sustaining model of success for multi-use forest management that creates outdoor spaces enjoyed by a community that values the rural economic benefit and connections to the land that ecological timber harvests and local lumber supply chains can provide.

To achieve this vision, we have identified 5 major areas to focus on between 2024 - 2029: Timber Harvests, Land Acquisition, Financial, Outreach & Communications, and Partnerships. A self-sustaining forestry program for Jefferson County will require approximately 6,000 acres (~3,000 acres as of 3/24) to support an overall average of financially viable timber harvests on a 20-30 year selective thinning rotation. The community and various partners are critical to the success of this program and this plan outlines how to educate and engage with the people of Jefferson County.

Years 1 and 2 are populated with specific tasks while Years 3-5 are more broadly outlined, with the understanding that we will use knowledge gathered in Years 1-2 to inform the subsequent annual goals.

Timber Harvests

5-year goal: planned harvests for 200 acres / year with the protocols and administrative infrastructure to support them

Year 1

- Conduct timber harvests at Elmira & Hadlock properties (both are projected to be revenue generating);
- Conduct 1 revenue loss harvest (TBD);
- Draft harvest SOPs including literature review for forestry practices;
- Identify Year 2 harvest(s);
- Chain of custody, metrics, where is wood going - case study

Year 2

- Conduct pre-commercial thinning and mulching at Beausite and/or Cape George;
- Chimacum 2nd touch harvest if needed for hazard tree removal (LRR ongoing monitoring);
- Draft case studies from timber harvest data

Year 3-5

- Develop an annual work plan for future timber harvests;
- Create an FMP template & overall harvest plan that encompasses general prescription;
- Develop criteria for sustainable management on county lands, including standards of practice for future harvests;
- Coordinate with Partnership goals to collaborate with small and large logging operations, including how to train the next generation

Timber Harvests Challenge: creating robust protocols so that harvests don't rely on the knowledge of one person

Land Acquisition

5-year goal: Acquire North Jacob Miller (119ac), Cape George (156ac), and Teal Lake (600ac) properties.

Year 1

- Follow up with any pending acquisition projects;
- Learn the alternative pathways for land acquisition for Jacob Miller & Cape George;
- Draft reference document / flow chart for land acquisition options and financial requirements

Year 2

- Continue acquisition process for identified properties;
- Update reference document as new process information becomes available

Year 3-5

- Continue acquisition process for identified properties;
- Generate case studies for partners and outreach;
- Apply reference document to create protocols for land acquisition;
- Identify wishlist properties to acquire in the event that funding is available

Land Acquisition Challenge: the process is opaque and the expenses are currently unknown

Financial

5-year goal: Create a self-sustaining forestry program with 20% timber sales in county, including saw logs and pulp

Year 1

- Sell a portion of Elmira & Hadlock harvested logs to local sawmills;
- Continue documenting harvest financials for future case studies;
- Generate funding database of relevant grants

Year 2

- Evaluate if there would be a County benefit to participating in available carbon markets and/or forest certification programs;
- Sell a portion of Year 2 harvested logs to local sawmills;
- Generate a plan for priorities and opportunities if funding becomes available

Year 3-5

- Pursue relevant grant opportunities;
- Identify equitable pay for each part of the supply chain;
- Develop a pay standard that integrates with the state DRA and the financial infrastructure to support this program;
- Continue to sell harvested logs to local sawmills;

- Create long-range models of financials and general longevity plan

Financials Challenge: long-term financial success will require sticking to the goals outlined in this plan and not getting distracted by side quests

Outreach / Communication

5-year goal: Establish a comprehensive (in person, web-based, etc) engagement program that communicates the past successes, current work, and future vision of the forestry program

Year 1

- Develop communications plan;
- Pilot communications in advance of and during fall timber harvests;
- Identify community- and regional-level outreach & education needs

Year 2

- Create webpage with interactive map for the general public;
- Optimize communications via community feedback;
- Integrate case studies (forestry objective) into communications;
- Identify additional outreach material needs to best communicate county program goals

Year 3-5

- Case studies for other counties, e.g. scaling down timber economies to the local level, chain of custody, how we sell logs back into the community;
- Promote program success;
- Develop additional outreach materials

Outreach & Communications challenge: while in-person events will ultimately be key to public engagement, they will be a distraction from developing needed materials in the beginning stages

Partnerships

5-year goal: develop a working relationship with all stakeholders and parts of the supply chain with a land works collaborative type model to support (and be supported by) the program

Year 1

- Develop list of stakeholders using Elmira & Hadlock harvests as a trial;
- Compile all the county-based plans and evaluate how the forestry program integrates with them;
- Evaluate engagement gaps - is everyone included?

- Initiate opportunities for research and citizen science

Year 2

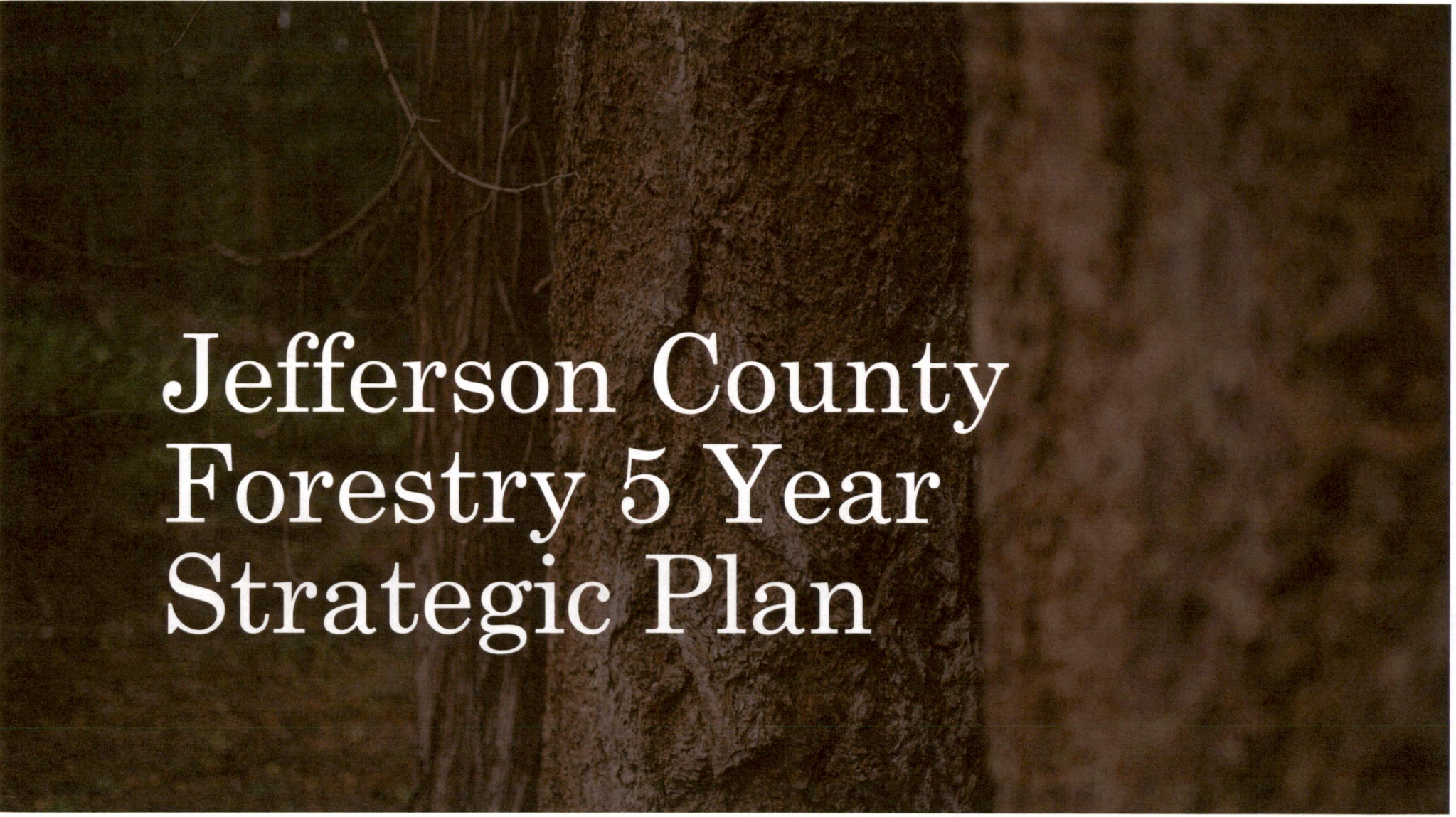
- Make and implement plan to engage with any stakeholders identified in the gap analysis;
- Develop plan for continuous stakeholder engagement, including all parts of the supply chain;
- SWOT analysis for local timber capacity (loggers, truckers, sawyers, end users)

Year 3-5

- Develop Jefferson land works collaborative model - for forestry;
- Create and implement plan for results of SWOT analysis

Partnerships challenge: ensuring that all partners are on the same page and working towards the same goals without having one person acting as the lynchpin that holds everything together

By the end of this 5-year Strategic Plan, Jefferson County will have the data, protocols, and next steps in place to maintain a long-term, ecologically- and socially-responsible forest management program.



Jefferson County Forestry 5 Year Strategic Plan



Vision Statement

In 25 years, Jefferson County's land stewardship is a **thriving, financially self-sustaining model of success for multi-use forest management** that creates outdoor spaces enjoyed by a community that values the **rural economic benefit and connections to the land** that ecological timber harvests and local lumber supply chains can provide.



5 Focus Areas

Timber Harvests

Land Acquisition

Financial

Outreach & Communications

Partnerships

Acreage Target

- Jefferson County currently owns approximately **3,000 acres** of forestland
- Most of that is divided into parcels 20 acres or less, which makes management difficult
- Estimated goal of **6,000 acres** of forestland to make forestry program for county economically sustainable



County Scale Forest Management

- Forests **selectively thinned in areas at 20-30-year intervals**. Forests will be contiguous and harvests will remove 20-30% volume from areas.
- By contrast, commercial industrial forest management is often **even-aged rotations of 30-80 years** with 100% volume removed at each rotation.
- County forest management is small and not intended to displace other types of forest management, instead it will add options for **forest management at a smaller scale**.

A low-angle photograph of a dense forest of tall evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, reaching towards a pale, overcast sky. The trees are dark green and fill most of the frame, with their branches and needles creating a complex, textured pattern. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day. The text "Focus Areas Goals" is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font.

Focus Areas Goals



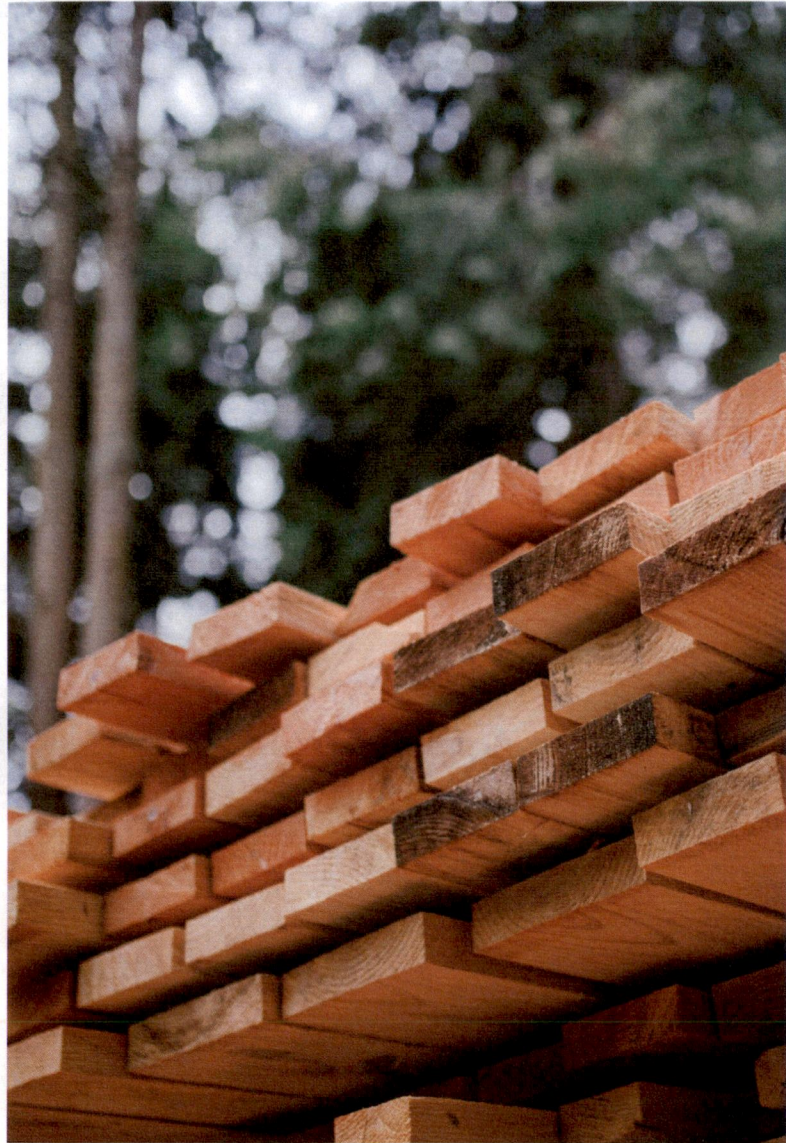
Timber Harvests

- *5-yr goal: planned harvests for 200 acres/yr avg with protocols and infrastructure to support them*
- Elmira & Hadlock selective harvests scheduled for fall/winter 2024
- Harvest SOP's and literature review for forestry practices
- Chain of custody and local wood sales case study
- Year 2: PCT thinning Beausite/Cape George, case studies from harvest data

Land Acquisition

- *5-yr goal: Acquire N Jacob Miller, Cape George, and Teal Lake properties*
- TLT and documenting pathway options for acquisition
- Building reference materials and case studies for partners and outreach
- Identify wish list properties to acquire if funding available





Financial

- *5-yr goal: Create self-sustaining forestry program with 20% timber sales in county, including saw logs and pulp*
- Sell portion of Elmire & Hadlock harvested logs to local sawmills
- Continue documenting harvest financials and generate case studies
- Evaluate feasibility/benefit to participating in carbon markets or certs
- Pursue relevant grant opportunities, cost share programs
- Develop pay standards for each part of supply chain

Outreach & Communication

- *5-yr goal: Establish comprehensive engagement program that communicates past successes, current work, and future vision for program*
- Developing communications plan
- Pilot communications plan and outreach events prior to timber harvests
- Create webpage for public
- Integrate case studies into communications



Partnerships

- *5-yr goal: Develop working relationship with all stakeholders and parts of supply chain with LandWorks Collaborative type model to support program*
- Develop list of stakeholders using Elmira & Hadlock harvests as a trial
- Compile county-based plans and evaluate forestry program integration
- Evaluate engagement gaps – is everyone included?
- Initiate opportunities for research and citizen science





By the end of the 5 year Strategic Plan Jefferson County will have the data, protocols, and next steps in place to maintain a long-term, ecologically and socially responsible forest management program appropriate to scale for our community.

A low-angle photograph of a tree trunk, showing its textured bark. The background is a dark, out-of-focus forest with light filtering through the leaves, creating a bokeh effect. The text "Thank You" is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

Thank You