

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

**** SPECIAL MEETING ****

Forestry Advisory Committee

LOCATION

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

**Time: October 25, 2022 10:00 am Pacific Time PM Pacific Time (US and
Canada)**

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

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88577925827>

Meeting ID: 885 7792 5827

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,88577925827# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88577925827>

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**** Special Meeting ****

TO: Forestry Advisory Committee
FROM: Joshua Fleischmann, Planner
DATE: October 24, 2022
SUBJECT: October 25, 2022 Meeting agenda

1. Roll call and determination of a quorum
2. Box of Rain Timber Sale
3. Open session to take public comment on forestry issues
4. Dismissal

Individuals who require special assistance to participate in the meetings are asked to contact at least 96 hours in advance.

Staff contact at Whatcom County Planning and Development Services
Joshua Fleischmann, jfleisch@co.whatcom.wa.us, 360-778-5952

October 21st, 2022

Draft

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

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

Dear Whatcom County Councilmembers,

This memo is in response to opposition for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) “Box of Rain” timber sale that is being considered for approval by the Board of Natural Resources on November 1st. The sale comprises 29.7 acres of variable retention harvesting and 2.4 acres of variable density thinning and is located at the confluence of Clearwater Creek and the Middle Fork Nooksack River. Approximately 1/3 of the trees in the sale area are dead and downed (see attached photo taken at center of the proposed harvest unit). There is a short window to salvage these logs, allowing carbon contained in them to be turned into stored carbon in wood products. Alternatively, this uncaptured carbon will be left to emit into the atmosphere.

The Forestry Advisory Committee has reviewed the “Key Talking Points” memo that was used to guide the many responses you may have seen for this proposal. We have determined that these points are either inaccurate, mischaracterized or misunderstood, are not directly relevant or the mitigations for these potential impacts have not been recognized. In the opinion of this Committee, DNR has carefully considered and mitigated for potential adverse environmental effects through multiple avenues. The *Sustainable Harvest Calculation*¹ sets the harvest volume at a level that maintains long-term viability of state forest resources. The most recent EIS for the Sustainable Harvest Calculation² analyzed carbon impacts and found that: “Carbon sequestration (from forest management on DNR-managed forestlands) is expected to be greater than emissions under all alternatives”. The *Policy for Sustainable Forests*³ was developed with input from the public, Tribes, trust beneficiaries and local and state governments and outlines an agency strategy to “support healthy forest ecosystems” while providing resource benefits to Washington communities. Because the proposal is located in Nuxw'iqw'em Cultural District, DNR further consulted with affected Tribes regarding site-specific impacts⁴. Habitat considerations for federally threatened terrestrial and aquatic species are addressed in both the *Habitat Conservation Plan*⁵ and the *Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy*⁶.

The Committee respectfully requests that you formally and publicly support this timber sale. Harvest activities within Whatcom County align with the goals outlined in the county code that implement the 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

¹ Board of Natural Resources Resolution No. 1560. WA DNR. (2019)

² https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/amp_sepa_nonpro_shc_feis_ch4.pdf

³ Policy for Sustainable Forests. WA DNR. (2006)

⁴ FPA 2818745 narrative at <https://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/fparsimages/apps745/fp2818745/fp2818745.pdf>

⁵ Final Habitat Conservation Plan. WA DNR. (1997)

⁶ Final State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan Amendment: Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy. WA DNR. (2019)

productivity.”⁷ Supporting the “Box of Rain” timber sale is an opportunity to maintain the integrity of this policy, reduce the fuel loading and associated risk of wildfire in the Middle Fork Nooksack, and support carbon-positive forest management.

Thank you for your consideration. The Committee would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss these points with you, or answer any questions you may have, at the October 25 Council meeting or at another time of your choosing.

Sincerely,

Whatcom County Forestry Advisory Committee

⁷ Whatcom County Code Chapter 20.43, Section 010 (2022)