

## **Concerns regarding Forest Management vision, large tree protection and landscape analysis**

*We received numerous comments that were similar or identical and raised the same concerns. The comments were variations of the following:*

The forest management strategy currently proposed by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) does not adequately prioritize the preservation of healthy fish and wildlife habitat, and instead opens the door to harmful logging and resource extraction in the name of economic development.

Hikers, hunters, anglers, and all Washingtonians who enjoy WDFW's public forests contribute substantially to our state's economy and to the agency's budget through license and pass sales, and significant state and local sales tax revenue.

WDFW must clearly and definitively align its strategy with longstanding conservation goals that preserve natural resources and perpetuate outdoor activities critical to our state's heritage and identity, including:

- Fix the vision. The Department should remove confusing and inappropriate economic objectives from its vision statement and elsewhere. State wildlife lands must be managed to protect and perpetuate fish and wildlife and healthy ecosystems. While economics are certainly an important factor, as project drivers they can undermine ecological outcomes. The Department must not sell the public's crown jewels to generate income, even when times are tough.
- Protect big and old trees. Habitat conditions on WDFW lands have been degraded by historic clear-cutting and high-grade logging and salvage. The Department should provide explicit direction to protect trees greater than 21" diameter unless incompatible with ecological goals or public safety.
- Embrace landscape-scale analysis: Modern restoration forestry is grounded in scientifically rigorous landscape analysis, since key ecological processes, like fire, and habitat connectivity occur at large spatial scales. For effective and efficient management activities, the Department must embrace landscape analysis as a fundamental element of its program.

Please revise the Forest Management Strategy to prioritize old-growth forests and healthy fish and wildlife habitat, and not open the door to resource extraction and the sale of our public inheritance.