



## **Middle May and DNR State Trust Lands in the Reiter Foothills**

The Board of Natural Resources and Snohomish County should maintain support for sustainable timber management on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) managed trust lands in the Reiter Foothills area of Snohomish County, including the pending Middle May timber sale.

**Background:** DNR's 10,000-acre Reiter Foothills forest is located about 30 miles east of Everett near the towns of Sultan, Gold Bar and Index. The area has a history of extensive timber harvest as many of these lands were once privately owned before reverting to county and then state ownership. The area is now managed as a healthy, second-growth working forest where timber harvests occur on a sustained yield basis to generate revenue for trust beneficiaries while also supporting trails and recreation uses consistent with DNR's trust mandate and the Multiple Use Act ([RCW 79.10.120](#)).

The Middle May timber sale was developed following litigation challenging the Singletary timber sale by activists who oppose timber harvests in the area. DNR's planning efforts for Middle May included a robust public involvement intended to address the concerns of project opponents in compliance with DNR's trust mandate, including reducing the size of the harvest area by shifting habitat protections to the area under the Northern Spotted Owl Conservation Strategy.

**Managed under strict environmental protections.** DNR manages the Reiter Foothills as a working forest under some of the strongest protections in the world, including the 1997 State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and the Forest Practices HCP - both approved by the federal government to provide habitat under the Endangered Species Act. These plans and other state policies already set aside about half of state trust lands from ongoing, sustainable timber harvest.

**A working forest AND a popular recreation area.** The Reiter Foothills is a working forest that benefits local communities, but it is also a popular destination for dispersed recreation. In April 2010, DNR finalized the [Reiter Foothills Recreation Plan](#) after conducting an environmental and management suitability assessment of the lands in the Reiter Foothills and incorporating input from hikers, motorized recreationalists, mountain bikers and other stakeholders. That plan took years to develop and supports motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities within a working forest.

**A critical source of revenue for public services.** The Washington DNR is required by state law to sustainably harvest timber on forested state trust lands to generate revenue for beneficiaries. Since 2013, 11 timber sales have been sold in the Reiter Foothills forest generating over \$15 million in revenue for essential public services, including Snohomish County, county roads, and local Junior Taxing Districts:

Sultan School District  
Index School District

Sno-Isle Rural Library  
Sky Valley Fire District

Snohomish County Hospital  
District #1

**Timber sales like Middle May are important to Junior Taxing Districts:** At a time when the Sultan School District is looking to pay for \$1 million in unforeseen structural repairs to one of its school

buildings, revenue from Middle May alone could provide the District with between \$300,000 and \$750,000 of non-tax dollars. Further delays or reductions in the sale harm the school district's ability to provide safe, secure, and quality learning facilities and programs.

**A working forest that creates rural jobs, wood products.** Timber harvests in the Reiter Foothills generate local jobs in the forestry sector – supporting rural communities in Snohomish County and beyond while producing renewable, carbon-friendly wood products right here in Washington.

**Working forests are rare in Snohomish County.** Of the more than one million acres of forest land in Snohomish County, only 254,294 (34%) are private working forests. About 640,000 acres (60%) is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and is not working forestland. In fact, between I-90 and the Canadian Border over 2.6 million acres of federal lands are permanently designated as Wilderness.

The 10,000-acre Reiter Foothills forest is part of nearly 165,000 acres managed by the DNR in Snohomish County that represent an ongoing endowment for funding public services while also supporting jobs, recreation, open spaces, and wildlife habitat.