



HILARY S. FRANZ  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

December 18, 2023

Councilmember Kaylee Galloway, District 1  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Councilmember Todd Donovan, District 2  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Councilmember Tyler Byrd, District 3  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Councilmember Kathy Kershner, District 4  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Councilmember Ben Elenbaas, District 5  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Councilmember Barry Buchanan, At-Large, Pos. A  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Councilmember Carole Frazey, At-Large, Pos. B  
1311 Grand Ave., Suite 105  
Bellingham, WA 98225

County Executive Satpal Singh Sidhu  
311 Grand Ave., Suite 108  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Whatcom County Councilmembers and Executive Sidhu,

I am writing to inform you that Washington State Department of Natural Resources staff have completed the preliminary identification of the lands to be included in the 2,000 acres of structurally complex, carbon dense forestland to be set aside directed by the Legislature’s Natural Climate Solutions proviso.

In Whatcom County, 650 acres have been identified as candidates to be transferred out of trust status after replacement land has been identified. The trust breakdown is:

<b>Anderson Creek</b>		<b>Brokedown Palace</b>	
<b>Trusts</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Trusts</b>	<b>Acres</b>
State Forest Transfer	190	State Forest Transfer	42
Scientific School	83	Common School	33
State Forest Purchase	64	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>75</b>
Common School and Indemnity	233		
Agricultural School	4		
Capitol Grant	1		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>575</b>		

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In selecting areas for consideration, the department worked to meet multiple co-benefits. We sought to conserve areas adjacent to existing habitat, in areas to improve habitat connectivity, and to avoid isolated small fragments scattered across ownership. The Anderson Creek area (see attached maps) was selected because it creates a large, contiguous block of structurally complex forest within Lake Whatcom Watershed and is adjacent to already conserved marbled murrelet habitat. This site will allow for the creation of a larger contiguous Natural Resource Conservation Area (NRCA). The Anderson Creek parcel does contain one planned sale where most of the fieldwork was complete. This area is low in structural development and the department may evaluate that area for a variable density thinning to accelerate development of complex structure, but that has yet to be determined.

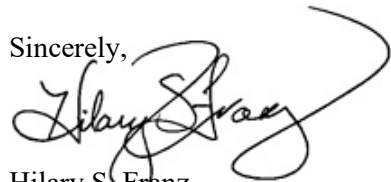
The Brokedown Palace site was selected based on county council input as well as its location adjacent to existing old growth reserves and relative proximity to the 2500-acre Middle Fork Special Habitat Area that was conserved in 2019 as part of the amendment to the department's Habitat Conservation Plan for greater Marbled Murrelet protections.

These parcels will be added to the list of initially identified acres and will be presented to the Board of Natural Resources during its January 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The purpose of this presentation is to cover details of the parcels and answer any questions that the Board may have.

As the proviso states, DNR will need written concurrence on the parcels from "*the legislative authority of the county*" before they can be transferred. Ideally, that concurrence would occur before January 31, 2024, so the department can finalize parcels and work to acquire replacement lands, especially those that benefit the county and junior taxing districts.

We would be happy to meet with the Council to present on the parcels listed above and answer questions that you may have. Please contact Sarah Ogden, Trust Outreach Specialist, at [sarah.ogden@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:sarah.ogden@dnr.wa.gov) and she can coordinate a discussion.

Sincerely,



Hilary S. Franz  
Commissioner of Public Lands