



Olympic Forest Coalition

The mission of the Olympic Forest Coalition is to protect and restore forest and aquatic ecosystems on the public lands of the Olympic Peninsula.

July 9, 2010

Please
visit our
[Web site](#)
for more
information
on other
forest issues
and to donate
so that we can
continue our work.

Stand Up for the Trees and Sound Science in the OESF!

A brief comment period to the proposed forest land management plan for the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) has begun and will **end July 15**.

Washington state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is evaluating management alternatives that will determine the future of this important area, home to five species of salmon and steelhead, bull trout, endangered Marbled Murrelets and Northern Spotted Owls, and hundreds of other species that have evolved in this complex and wet environment.

Two alternatives are included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): the No Action Alternative (the status quo) and the Landscape Alternative. The conservation community has drafted a better alternative with fewer environmental impacts.

Background: The best remaining older forest and aquatic habitats on land managed by DNR are found in the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF). Streams and rivers flowing through forest lands in this region sustain the strongest populations of salmon and bull trout in Washington. Unfortunately, this area---with its steep and unstable slopes---has been left badly damaged by overharvest of ancient forests, roads (and the enormous sediment inputs they cause), and inadequate buffer protection for streams and wetlands. The original mission of the OESF was to evaluate current conditions and apply conservation or restoration strategies to bring back healthy salmon and endangered bird habitat, while continuing to permit logging operations. Instead, DNR now proposes to double the level of harvest without funding for research, especially in riparian zones. But DNR has not conducted the research or monitoring to show that this will work over time.

OFCO is conducting an environmental and legal review of the Draft EIS, and we ask that you please support our comments.

Why This Is Important: Your comments will show widespread public support for a conservatively managed Olympic Experimental State Forest.

What You Can Do: OFCO is requesting your support in commenting to DNR by July 15. Points to make in your comments:

1. Support the OFCO comments with its own conservation alternative which has articles and support from across the environmental community.
2. Support the Conservation Alternative, which reduces the impacts from

DNR's commercial harvest and closely follows DNR's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Reject the Landscape Alternative.

3. The No Action Alternative must reflect current management, not the modeled harvest level 30% greater than that currently allowed. It must be redone.
4. Timber harvest is not a riparian conservation or aquatic ecosystem restoration strategy! The HCP requires DNR to implement both: "All conservation, research, and management strategies were designed in concert to achieve an integrated management approach." (HCP, IV.106)
5. DNR needs to either complete the stalled Marbled Murrelet Conservation Strategy BEFORE completing the OESF Landscape Plan or defer harvest in all those areas identified as potential habitat for this threatened species.
6. "Current conditions" and "minimum thresholds" are not appropriate points from which to assess healthy riparian function that is intended to provide habitats for fish and wildlife and to restore and protect water quality. The Draft EIS alternatives should use reference conditions from unharvested, healthy riparian habitats.
7. Landscape planning is a good concept, but requires good baseline data to inform future management. DNR needs to update its site-specific landscape-level analysis program to identify the current condition of watersheds and forest stands, and to tailor future harvest plans and road construction to restore impacted habitats to good condition.

Please send your comments to sepacenter@dnr.wa.gov with Subject: OESF comments.

For further information:

[DNR Site](#)
[Settlement Agreement](#)

Remember, the deadline for comments is July 15. THANK YOU!!

For more info, contact: [Marcy Golde](#)