



PROMOTING THE PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF NATURAL FOREST ECOSYSTEMS AND THEIR PROCESSES ON THE OLYMPIC PENINSULA, INCLUDING FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND SURROUNDING ECOSYSTEMS

February 18, 2019

The Honorable Steve Tharinger, Chair
House Capital Budget Committee
Washington State Legislature
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
Electronic correspondence

RE: Support of Capital Expenditure for Trust Land Transfer Program

Dear Representative Tharinger:

I am writing on behalf of the Olympic Forest Coalition in support of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) full budget request in the Capital Budget to carry out several Trust Land Transfer projects for the Olympic Peninsula and the state. The Olympic Forest Coalition supports the DNR in this important ecological, recreational, and land management program. The program is 30 years old this year and merits a significant infusion of support from our Legislature.

The Trust Land Transfer (TLT) budget request will support two projects for the Peninsula: the Devil's Lake addition, and the additions to the Dabob Bay conservation area. Both are critical projects for the environmental, endangered species habitat, and have been on DNR's list of projects to transfer for the past two biennia. Please support the full appropriation request the TLT program. The appropriation will ensure that the trusts and beneficiaries, and the DNR, forest lands fulfill their mandate, conserve important habitats, and are not a dead asset.

The Trust Land Transfer program is critical for protecting key biological and recreational lands in Washington. The TLT program has assisted the DNR in the following ways:

- Transferred DNR land of high ecological value to a protected status
- Allowed the DNR to avoid costly court fights over ESA-listed species like the Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet
- Allowed DNR to transfer out of marginal or off-base land of steep slopes, slide-prone areas, and higher elevation forests (Morningstar is an excellent example)
- Supported conservation of critical endangered species, as well as scientific research and local recreation areas on the Olympic Peninsula

In other areas of Washington, the program has permitted the DNR to be a major provider of recreational opportunities at Morningstar NRCA, Elk River NRCA, Loomis Forest NRCA, and many other areas. The TLT program also fostered the protection of drinking water areas -- again Morningstar is an excellent example, with Spada Lake providing the drinking water for 70% of Snohomish County. The program also allows for carbon sequestration in the forests, which in our currently changing climate is of paramount importance.

Please support the full DNR request for \$30 million, and please make certain that Devil's Lake and Dabob Bay projects remain high priorities for transfer.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie Gallant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Connie Gallant, President
Olympic Forest Coalition

Cc: The Honorable Kevin Van de Wege
The Honorable Mike Chapman
The Honorable Hilary Franz