

# The Leader

## DNR designates forest for conservation

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**An overview shot of Dabob Bay Natural Area to be expanded to protect additional state forest. View west to Olympics.**

Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz on Monday released the locations of 2,000 acres of structurally complex state forestland proposed to be set aside for conservation as funded by the Climate Commitment Act.

The parcels are spread across five counties and The Department of Natural Resources worked with the counties to identify parcels that are most valuable to protecting fish and wildlife habitat and natural and cultural values. These parcels are adjacent to existing conserved high-value habitat areas, improving fish and wildlife habitat connectivity and avoiding isolated small fragments of fish and wildlife conservation.

The largest tract, approximately 950 acres, will be preserved in two sites in east Jefferson County. The biggest portion included in the proposal is approximately 670 acres around Dabob Bay. The lands are adjacent to the boundary of the Dabob Bay Natural Area managed by DNR, creating enhanced fish and wildlife habitat connectivity. This area is recognized for its intact salt marsh and sand spit plant communities within one of Washington's highest-functioning coastal spit and tidal wetland systems. It includes mature coastal forests, coastal streams, feeder bluffs, forage fish spawning areas and open marine waters. These lands primarily support statewide school construction and local services.

The other approximately 280 acres to be protected are near Mount Walker and Notch Pass, and both are adjacent to existing long-term conservation areas. Those lands are currently designated to support schools, fire districts, and other local services.

“Not only are we protecting our special places, but we’re also protecting our future,” said Peter Bahls, executive director of the Northwest Watershed Institute. “Using Climate Commitment Act funding to conserve unique forests and purchase more suitable replacement lands for timber production provides value for all our communities and makes sure that our most high-quality forests will be there for the future.”