

Mark Ray Mauren, Shoreline District Manager
Washington State Department of Natural Resources
7216 78th Ave. NW
Big Harbour, WA 98335 USA

Telephone: (360) 825-1631

Putting Theory into Practice Plenary

Today We Touch Tomorrow: Management of Washington State's Urban, Forest and Aquatic Trust Lands from an Asset Stewardship Perspective

Washington State has one million acres of agricultural lands, 2.1 million acres of forest land, and two million acres of aquatic lands to manage for current and future generations. These trust lands generate more than \$200 million per year to support schools, universities, prisons, and Capitol Buildings. They also provide critical habitat, recreational opportunities and other amenities for all citizens. The Department of Natural Resources considers itself a leader in natural resource management, and has moved from selling these assets (1889 - 1920's) to selling cutting rights (1920's - 1940's) to managing the timber resource (1940's - 1980's) to multiple resource management (1980's - 1990's) to management of these lands from an asset stewardship perspective. What this really means and how it is implemented on the ground is a monumental challenge.

Over the last couple of years I have led or been involved in several projects that have changed how the department approaches management of its assets. In the process the Department has challenged other agencies (Federal, State and local), private landowners, and private companies on how they view, manage, or regulate forest and aquatic lands. These projects have been successful but not without scars. The following is a snapshot of the projects:

Loomis State Forest: a 130,000 acre block of forest and grazing land between the Canadian Border, Pasayten Wilderness Area and the Sinlahekin River, primarily made up of over-mature Lodge Pole Pine. Several issues have been a major challenge: thousands of acres of Lodge Pole Pine have been killed or infested by a Mountain Pine beetle; it has some of the best habitat left in the lower 48 states for the Canadian Lynx, which is on the State threatened list; the forest is within a Grizzly Bear recovery area; it is an important watershed for agricultural community; it is an important recreational area; and a traditional tribal hunting and gathering area. All these issues came to a head in 1993. The environmental community had stopped our timber sales program; the local mill and loggers were frustrated that we were not selling wood; we were at odds with other State agencies; and the local community was very upset. Over a period of a year we worked with the local community, environmentalists, loggers and agencies and developed a set of management goals and objectives for the Forest. These provided the framework from which we

developed a landscape plan utilizing state-of-the-art modeling tools, and for the first time committing to managing State trust lands for more than timber production.

Habitat Conservation Plan (HPC) In 1994 the Department embarked on a habitat conservation plan for the forest lands we manage in western Washington. This plan protects and enhances habitat that is critical for the survival of the Northern Spotted Owl, salmon, and 25 other species that could be potentially listed within the next 20 years. The plan took three years to develop and was very controversial. The challenge was how to apply the guidelines outlined in the HCP on the ground. The first harvest unit in the area that I manage was a 1.2 million board foot sale that encompassed more than 160 acres. By first understanding the critical features and functions that need to be protected in the watershed (wetlands, older residual trees, salmon bearing streams and unstable slopes), and then the harvest area, we were able to design a sale that met our ecological guidelines (HPC) and maximize the revenue generated from this harvest unit.

Commencement Bay In Commencement Bay and other urban embayments in Washington State we are beginning to pay the price of a century of misuse. Historically we have used or viewed our aquatic environment as a dumping ground: "out of sight, out of mind". This led to Commencement Bay being one of the most polluted embayments in the USA. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency has designated five sites in the bay as Super Fund sites. These sites are so toxic for human health and safety that the Federal Government has stepped in to supervise the clean up. Commencement Bay is also home to the White River Chinook Salmon, which was recently proposed for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Unfortunately for the Department, most of the contamination ended up on State-owned aquatic lands. The challenge from an operational perspective was to first separate the management of these lands from the liability discussion (internally and externally). The next step was to move the clean-up and restoration forward and in a direction that would not only clean up the Bay, but begin to restore some of the critical features and functions needed by the White River Chinook and other aquatic organisms. We were able to challenge and change the way people viewed clean-up, make major strides in bringing back some critical functions and features in a heavily industrialized area, and develop public/private partnerships to make it happen.

All three projects are examples of how the Department has challenged itself and others to view land/resource management in a new light. However, more importantly they leave a legacy for our kids to enjoy and opportunities for future land managers to build from.