

## For Immediate Release

### Old Growth Documented in Green Thomas Timber Sale

**An independent stand assessment by the Center for Responsible Forestry contradicts DNR's description of the Green Thomas timber as an even-aged, 90-year old forest.**



An independent stand age assessment, conducted by the Center for Responsible Forestry provides clear and compelling evidence of old growth in the Green Thomas timber sale. The area mapped as old growth was not excluded from the timber sale, and despite claims by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources Pacific Cascade Region office, these trees are not marked as leave trees, or contained within any identifiable leave tree area or riparian buffer. The report prepared by a professional forestry consultant, states that these trees "displayed old-growth characteristics typical of legacy trees," and estimates, based on a core sample extracted from one of the trees, that they are about 190 years old.

The Center for Responsible Forestry specifically called out this patch of old growth in a letter that was submitted to the Board of Natural Resources on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Traces of blue paint are evident on a few of these trees. These trees were probably painted in 2011 when the sale was originally prepared for auction, before it was re-classified as murrelet habitat and subsequently released for harvest in 2019.

The report further concludes that a majority of the trees that co-dominate the main canopy in other parts of this timber sale range between 100 to 120 years old. This conclusion contradicts assertions made by DNR's

Pacific Cascade Region office that the timber sale is composed of an even-aged forest that "was regenerated around 1930."

We reported in the SEPA comment letter that we submitted to DNR in August, based on our own observations, and a review of historic aerial photos, that many of the trees in this timber sale are likely well over 100 years old, and provided DNR with a copy of the 1951 aerial photo, which clearly shows a range of conditions and age classes within the area targeted for harvest. The Lands Commissioner pledged earlier this year to "reviewing state forests west of the Cascades that sprouted before 1900 to evaluate alternative uses to logging, including biodiversity, carbon storage, water quality, and recreation." DNR has implemented a new "stand origin" screening assessment for timber sales in Capitol State Forest to identify for stands that originated prior to 1900, but no such assessment was conducted for Green Thomas.

DNR was clearly negligent in its failure to adequately consider the evidence that was provided to them, and in its failure to follow their own screening procedures. During the October 5<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, DNR's Product Sales Division Manager was asked by one of the Board members if DNR had performed an assessment, or done any dating of trees within the sale, to ensure that the sale is "consistent with Board policy in terms of older trees and [their] old growth status". The Product Sales Division Manager responded that the biologists were not called in to assess the stand because the foresters had determined that "there was nothing remotely close to meeting those criteria" in the Green Thomas sale. The Product Sales Manager further implied that DNR is not required to protect older forests unless they pre-date 1850, thus ignoring the Commissioner's directive to evaluate alternative uses to logging for stands originating prior to 1900.

"This is a fundamental betrayal of the public trust," said Stephen Kropp, Director of the Center for Responsible Forestry. "We should not be logging these forests at all."

Because the decision by the BNR to approve this sale was based on false, misleading, or incomplete information, the Center for Responsible Forestry is calling on the Board of Natural Resources to immediately rescind their approval of this timber sale and direct DNR to cancel any existing sales contract.

For more information, see:

<https://www.c4rf.org/green-thomas>