

NEWS RELEASE

No. 08-009

January 17, 2008

Contact: Patty Henson, 360-902-1023;

patricia.henson@dnr.wa.gov

DNR to Coordinate Woody Debris Removal for Storm Recovery

No-cost removal service available for farms affected by December flooding

OLYMPIA - Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland announced today that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will coordinate removal of woody debris in the upper Chehalis River Valley and surrounding locations where early December flooding deposited this material on farmlands. Removal services would be available at no cost to farmers who request the agency's assistance and authorize access to their land. DNR is coordinating the woody debris removal effort with the state's other natural resources agencies, the State Military Department Emergency Management Division, and local governments in the affected counties.

"DNR is well positioned to facilitate this removal effort in order to allow local farmers to recover their fields as soon as possible," Sutherland said. "Our expertise with emergency response and our contacts with the forest products industry are resources that will help get this done efficiently," he added.

DNR made visual assessments in Lewis County to determine the extent of the woody debris. Most of it is concentrated in the vicinity of Boistfort and Ceres.

Assessments have not yet been done in Pacific or Grays Harbor Counties, but agricultural properties in those counties are eligible for the service. DNR will work with the counties, local conservation districts, and Natural Resources Conservation Service to get information to the farmers who have woody debris from the storm on their agricultural lands.

The goal of the effort is to clear the woody debris from agricultural fields and then market as much as possible. At this time, it appears most of the marketable wood will be chipped for fuel. Any proceeds from the effort will be used to defray the cost of the removal.

Commissioner Sutherland will attend the Lewis County Farm Bureau meeting this evening in the Boistfort Valley to share information on the program.

Interested property owners should contact Region Manager Eric Schroff at the Pacific Cascade Region office in Castle Rock: 360-577-2025.

DNR Serves Variety of Roles

DNR manages more than 5.3 million acres of state-owned forest, range, commercial, agricultural, and aquatic lands. The department also provides wildfire protection for 12.7 million acres of private and state-owned forest lands; administers Forest Practices rules and surface mine reclamation on state and private lands; gives technical assistance for forestry and mining; and provides financial and grant assistance to local communities and individuals.

DNR is administered by Doug Sutherland, the 12th Commissioner of Public Lands since statehood in 1889.

###