



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

# Forest Offset Protocol Technical Working Group

February 4th, 2025

Meeting #8

# Agenda

- Topic #1 Conservation easement flexibility
- Topic #2 Alternative IFM baseline concept (John Nickerson)
- Public comment opportunity



# Reminder: Role of this working group

- This working group is not tasked with making consensus recommendations changes to Ecology rule or adopted protocols
- Ecology will consider multiple sources and perspectives, including the input collected through this working group, when deciding how to proceed with changes to this protocol
- Input provided by working group members, even if unanimous, should not be considered an indicator of the changes Ecology may or may not make



# Disclosure of relevant financial interest or professional engagements

- At the start of each meeting Ecology will ask working group participants to disclose any financial interests or professional engagements related to the considered protocol revisions being discussed
- Disclosure of a relevant financial interest **does not preclude** participation in the discussion

# Examples of financial interests relevant to today's discussion

- Intention or consideration of development of a forest offset project that would include a conservation easement
- Any other financial interests that may be perceived as pertinent to this discussion

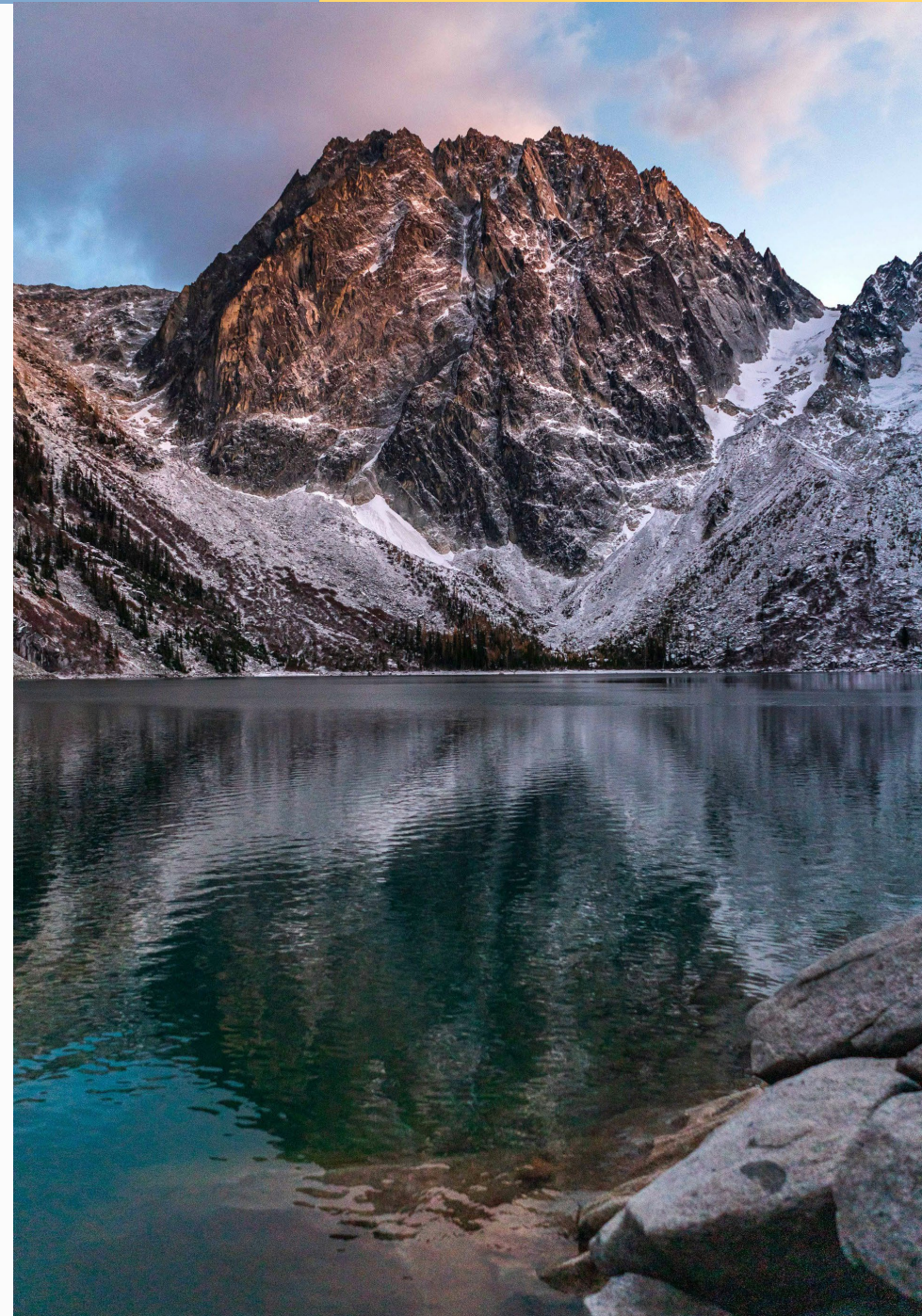
# Disclosures shared in prior meeting

Prospective project development	Other experiences related to project development	Experiences related to registration, verification, or protocol development
Mike Warjone – Port Blakely	Sheldon Zakreski – Living Sky Carbon Solutions	Jon Remucal – Climate Action Reserve
Steve Hinton – Tulalip Tribes	Felipe Casarim – BP	Tani Colbert Sangree – GHG Institute
Jonathan Pomp – Green Assets		John Nickerson – Dogwood Springs Forestry
Jeremy Koslowski – The Climate Trust		
Edward Mann – Global Forest Carbon		
Ed Murphy – Sierra Pacific Industries		
David Ford – L & C Carbon		
Kathleen Farley Wolfe – King County DNR		
Ben Parkhurst - Anew		

# Disclosure opportunity



Please use the raise hand feature to share a relevant disclosure





# Topic #1: Conservation easement flexibility

- Overview of CARB Taskforce recommendation regarding conservation easement flexibility
- Discussion
- Poll





# Existing Treatment

- Existing treatment in CARB 2015 Protocol
  - US Forest Protocol 2015, Appendix D
  - “(c)For a Qualified Conservation Easement to be considered for a reporting period it must be in place prior to the end of the reporting period”
- Avoided conversion projects must either have a QCE in place at the end of the first reporting period, or be transferred to public ownership

# Conservation Easements Treatment

- CARB Taskforce Recommendation
  - Allow Qualified Conservation Easements (QCE's) to be granted up to the point where proponent requests issuance of jurisdiction offset credits
  - Allow QCE's to be granted in phases over 5 years *after* initial issuance for credits by the jurisdiction
    - Potentially all issued credits would be placed in the buffer pool until completion of easement enrollment
  - Require binding agreement with the proponent whenever QCE's are issued after the end of the initial reporting period

# Rationale for providing additional flexibility on QCE adoption date

- Rationale:
  - At present the protocol requires a QCE be recorded prior to verification, introducing significant risk to forest owner if a verification statement is not positive
  - The scale and expense of QCE's may make it infeasible to enroll an entire project in a single QCE prior to offset credit issuance

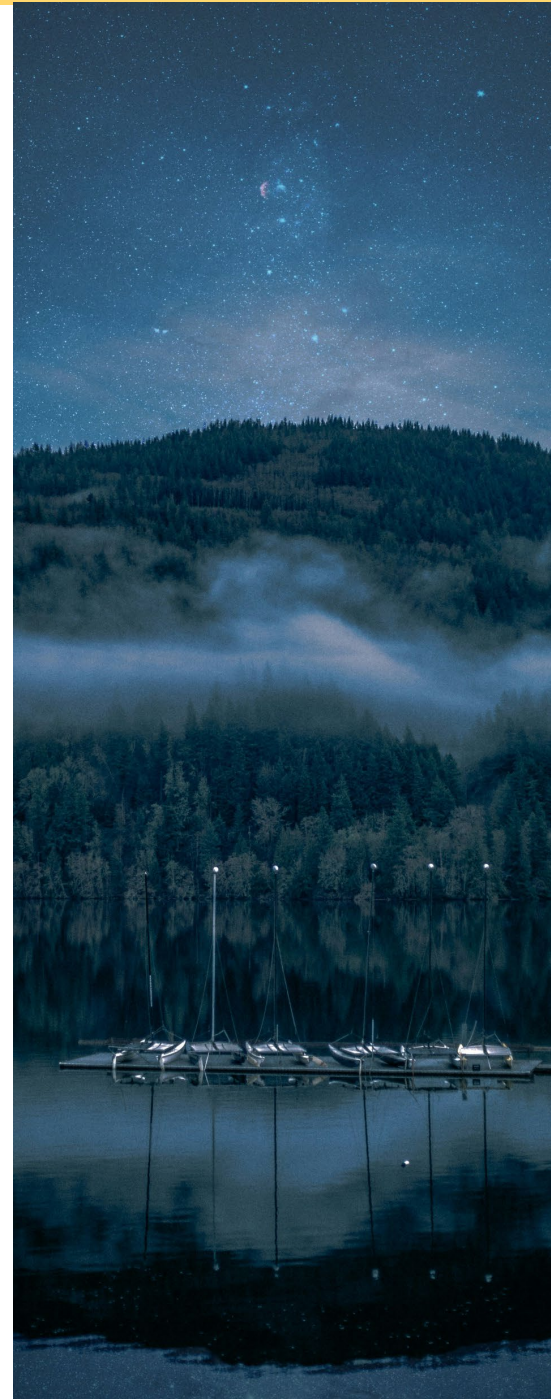


# Treatment in comparable protocols

- CAR US forest v5.1
  - Recording of QCE constitutes the project start date
  - Multiple QCE's may be used across a single project area however:
    - All QCE's must have a common fee owner
    - All QCE's must have been recorded within a span of 12 months
    - The project start date is the date of last easement recording

# Discussion

- Corrections, context, and clarifications related to project aggregation
- Would this change significantly impact the viability of projects that include a conservation easement?
  - Why or why not?
- What risks does this conservation easement flexibility create in the market and how could those risks be mitigated?



# Poll #1



## Topic #2: IFM baseline

- Review of prior input on IFM baseline topic
- Silviculture based approach concept
  - John Nickerson
- Discussion
- Poll



# IFM – Private Lands baseline approach

- Discussed in Oct. meeting
- Suggested opportunities for refinement:
  - Reduce reliance on common practice statistics; which could present a risk of selection bias
  - Revise quantification of the logical management unit calculation approach
  - Consider alternative approach to timing of credit issuance to mitigate the large initial issuance of offsets
  - Seek opportunities to reduce costs of baseline calculation and verification
  - Consider a baseline that is responsive to changes in legal requirements or market dynamics over time

Based on your current understanding of forest project baselines, which of the following most closely resembles your recommendation to Ecology?

Ecology should retain the existing approach to private IFM forest project baselines, updating underlying data sources as appropriate

Ecology should consider revisions to the IFM baseline calculation methodology to reduce costs and revise assessment area and LMU definitions while retaining overall approach

Ecology should consider an alternative IFM baseline calculation methodology from another offset registry protocol, such as use of dynamic baselines

Ecology should pursue an alternative and novel IFM baseline calculation approach

John Nickerson- i think you can add dynamic to this approach too -declining baseline too

Felipe Casarim

and history- expanding a dynamic approach is key

Chao Wu

Theresa Keith -  
Wa DNR

Sheldon Zakreski,  
LSCS

Ben P- it will be easiest to fix the current baseline approach than to try to adopt a completely new approach. Could adopt some of the baseline assessments from ACR 2.1 to confirm baseline feasibility.

Tani Colbert-  
Sangree

Jon Remucal - revise but consider some of the baseline considerations under ACR IFM v2.1 (e.g., dynamic assessment over time)

Edward Mann-  
Baseline needs to be linked to forest management

Ed Murphy -  
investment based baseline

Grayson Badgley



# Silviculture investment baseline concept

# Discussion

- Clarifications/questions for John
- Would this approach result in credit issuance that is more rigorously quantified than the existing baseline approach?
  - Why or why not?
- Would this approach reduce barriers or costs of project development compared with the existing approach?
  - Why or why not?
- Is this approach implementable?
  - Why or why not?
- What remaining questions or areas of uncertainty do you have about this concept?



# Poll #2



# Next steps

- No additional meetings planned
- We may reach out individually with additional questions in the coming months
- Ecology will prepare a decision report outlining our proposed approach to revise this protocol
- We will seek input from the Environmental Justice Offset Working Group
- We intend to publish the decision report and, as applicable, a draft protocol in the summer





# Thank you!

Contact: [CCAOffsets@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:CCAOffsets@ecy.wa.gov)





# Public Comment Opportunity

## Guidelines for providing public comment

- Up to two minutes per person
- Host will unmute you and begin timer
- Please keep the comments related to forestry or offset projects
- Ecology will not respond to comments in this meeting
- Please use “raise hand” button to indicate that you wish to provide a comment

