

Forestry crews at three camps will no longer be funded, three other camps will see a reduction

Local News

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OLYMPIA - The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today took the first step to address its budget crisis by alerting affected employees of pending expenditure reductions to the forestry program in correction camps.

"The budget situation has impacted the entire state and DNR, like any family or business, has been forced to make some very difficult decisions," said Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark. "We must move forward quickly to reduce expenditures and maintain fund balances in our operating accounts that are not tied to the state's general fund."

DNR will no longer operate forest work crews in three correctional camps; Naselle, Mission Creek and Monroe. These reductions will result in the elimination of 12 crews. At the same time, DNR will be scaling back current department operations at Olympic, Cedar Creek, and Larch camps. These camps will see either a reduction in crews, a switch of some crews from year-round to seasonal, or both. The state's general fund comprises less than one third of the overall budget of the DNR. The commodities market, on which a majority of DNR's budget relies, has been severely impacted by the national economic downturn. Eighteen months ago timber was trading at \$340 mbf (thousand board feet) and last month that number dropped to \$152 mbf. The sharp decline in the markets has prompted immediate action to maintain fund balances. In an e-mail to DNR staff on Monday, the announcement was made that 94 employees, including 36 in the camps program, will be notified that their positions are "at risk." The department is working with the unions to address the layoff situation resulting from a decrease in revenue from land management funds. This reduction does not include any reductions that will result from a loss in state general fund support.