In collaboration with the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and The Trust for Public Land worked with landowner Green Diamond Resource Company to protect approximately 20,000 acres of private forest lands in Mason County, near Puget Sound. Without protection, this land would have been at risk of conversion to non-forest use due to population pressure from nearby metropolitan areas. Protected, this working forest supports the local economy as well as critical habitat. “Mason County’s proximity to Puget Sound and Hood Canal makes it an attractive development opportunity,” explained David Walters, Vice President of Acquisitions and Business Development at Green Diamond. “By removing development rights on Green Diamond’s land in this area, we ensure working forests will continue to be an important part of the economy in this region.”

The project provides benefits that reflect the priorities of stakeholders, including rural communities, conservation groups, and local tribes. The project supports the region’s forestry industry, which provides 8% of Mason County’s direct jobs and 7.5% of its direct wages. The project lands support over 100 direct and indirect jobs worth over $5 million in wages.

“Working forests are a major part of Mason County’s economy, and this project helps to ensure a healthy forest products industry here for many years to come,” said Blayde Fry, Vice President and General Manager at Green Diamond. Green Diamond is donating over 21 miles of trail easements across the project’s footprint to provide increased public access to recreation in perpetuity.

The project promotes healthy, productive waters for salmon and shellfish and helps safeguard water quality for shellfish on 1,400 acres of tidelands in Oakland Bay for more than 20 shellfish companies and 2,000 recreational and tribal harvesters. “This conservation easement is a critical step in helping to protect the water quality in the nearby inlets,” said Bill Taylor, President of Taylor Shellfish. “The easement will help to ensure that these inlets will continue to produce shellfish for tribal harvesters, recreational harvesters and shellfish farmers. The easement will not only benefit the environment in the long term but also the local economy.”

Healthy, productive waters for salmon and shellfish are important for the Squaxin Island Tribe and Skokomish Tribe ways of life. The easement will not only benefit the environment and the local economy but also the local economy. “Working forests are a major part of Mason County’s economy, and this project helps to ensure a healthy forest products industry here for many years to come,” said Blayde Fry, Vice President and General Manager at Green Diamond. Green Diamond is donating over 21 miles of trail easements across the project’s footprint to provide increased public access to recreation in perpetuity.

The South Puget Sound Coastal Forest project demonstrates the utility of the Forest Legacy Program in supporting local economies that are not strictly dependent on forestry-related activities.

**AT-A-GLANCE**

- **Supports over 100 jobs** worth over $5 million in wages.
- **Secured public access on 22,353 acres.**
- **Green Diamond is donating over 21 miles of trail easements.**
- **Creates a 10-mile long conservation corridor connecting the project’s 20,000 acres to over 24,000 acres of state, local, and private lands.**

For more information, visit [https://www.dnr.wa.gov/leaving-legacy-forests](https://www.dnr.wa.gov/leaving-legacy-forests).