

# **Development of Potential Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands**

**Agricultural Sector Carbon Market Workgroup Committee Meeting**

**August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008**

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Basis for Selection

***In Washington there is (at least) 1.55 million acres currently protected through enrollment in conservation contracts, leases, agreements or other similar mechanisms***

***In Washington there is (at least) 1 million acres currently leased for grazing purposes.***

***Together these lands represent a significant potential for carbon sequestration***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Basis for Selection

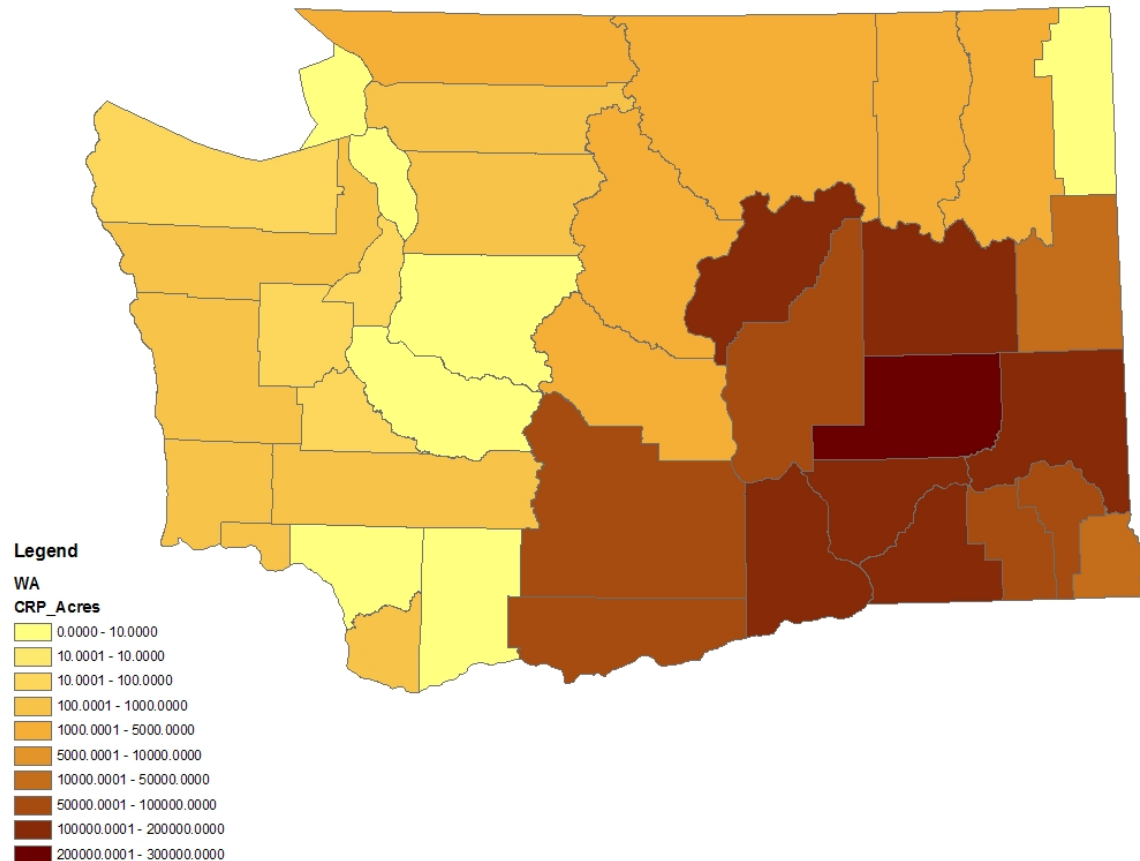
***Carbon sequestration potential for conservation lands is estimated at .32 MMTC or 1.13 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e***

***Carbon sequestration potential for grazing lands is estimated at .62 MMTC or 2.29 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e***

***Because of near term changes in policy and markets the potential exists for significant loss of some conservation lands (CRP) to active agricultural thereby potentially increasing GHG emissions and reducing sequestration potential***

# Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

## Basis for Selection



## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Potential Barriers to Inclusion

#### *Additionality*

- *Co-benefit issue, original intent to protect water quality, habitat, landscape enhancement*
- *Carbon sequestration only recently added as intent (CRP, CREP)*
- *Philosophical issues surrounding “double payments”*
- *Future impacts to GHG emissions as a result of terminating conservation contracts or agreements*

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Potential Barriers to Inclusion

#### Baselines

- *Project Specific*
  - \* *How much data is adequate*
  - \* *What type of data (solely soil carbon)*
- *Standardized*
  - \* *What year to use as baseline*
  - \* *Regional vs. National Data*
- *Questions regarding uncertainty and natural variation*

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Potential Barriers to Inclusion

#### Measurement, Monitoring, and Verification

##### - *Modeling Approaches*

- \* *How much data is adequate to achieve “calibration”*
- \* *When is confidence achieved for regional application*

##### - *Use of Existing Approaches*

- \* *Initial acceptance of BMP type of approach (Standardized)*
- \* *CCX basis with margin of safety*

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Draft Recommendations

#### Overall

***Significant potential exists to pursue development of offsets from conservation and grazing lands***

***Co-benefits of conservation and grazing lands should not be considered a negative and value added should be explored***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Draft Recommendations

#### Specific

***Offsets are valid for current conservation lands kept in conservation status that would otherwise revert to actively worked agricultural lands following termination of contract or agreement after July 1, 2008.***

***Current financial benefits to landowners should not be a consideration***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Draft Recommendations

#### Specific

***Offsets are valid for the voluntary conversion of actively worked agricultural lands to conservation lands regardless of primary purpose as long as carbon sequestration is a recognized co-benefit***

***For current conservation lands that have more than 5 years left on contract, offsets should be considered as of July 1, 2008. Using the July 1<sup>st</sup> date may prevent early termination of conservation contracts due to market conditions that compel a land owner to return the land to active agricultural activities***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Draft Recommendations

#### **Measurement, Monitoring, and Verification**

***Develop public policy statement regarding the short term need for offsets with a reasonable approach to achieving MMV related to conservation and grazing lands***

***Initial MMV/Baseline based on standardized assessment, quickly moving to project specific assessments***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Draft Recommendations

#### Baselines

***Develop a site-specific baseline measuring initial soil carbon within a project area at the time of implementation; or***

***Develop an anecdotal baseline established using the state inventory of conservation lands. The Washington state inventory considering conservation lands was established using 1990 and the “Century” model***

***Collect sufficient existing data from land owners (regarding soil carbon) to develop initial “baseline” and refine over time using site specific data***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Draft Recommendations

#### **Data Development Needs**

***Development and acceptance of a uniform model or models that can be used to “estimate” carbon sequestration***

***Data collection protocols for site specific projects and “build-up” of statewide database***

***Additional research into effects of managed grazing practices on soil and biomass carbon sequestration***

## Offsets Related to Conservation and Grazing Lands

### Additional Discussion Not Covered

#### *Transfer of Development Rights*

***Committee opinion regarding offset potential for lands that are purchased for conservation, that may continue to be working (using progressive practices) but cannot be developed or practices must be conducted in prescribed manner***