



## **Jeralee Anderson Urbanist Questionnaire 2024**

Washington State Lands Commissioner

**How do you envision the role of the DNR in addressing environmental justice issues, particularly in communities disproportionately affected by environmental degradation?**

As the leading organization for the State in environmental protection, DNR must champion environmental justice initiatives in Washington communities damaged by past pollution as well as preventing further degradation. This includes a clear policy statement from leadership committing to environmental justice and intergenerational equity goals, as well as setting specific restoration targets for DNR projects.

**What specific strategies do you propose to ensure that public lands managed by the DNR are accessible and beneficial to all communities, regardless of socioeconomic status or race?**

I will work collaboratively to target Climate Commitment Act funds in the areas where these funds can accelerate the State's transition to green energy. I will also work to enable community workforce agreements for the DNR labor forces, especially those experiencing high rates of development and underserved areas.

**Would you sign into law a bill implementing or allowing for rent stabilization? Why or why not?**



As Commissioner of Public Lands, I would be able to advocate for rent stabilization at the legislative level. For the Department of Natural Resources, I would review the leases for public land tenants to understand rent stabilization needs for communications providers.

**How will you prioritize the management of public lands to support urban green infrastructure and promote healthy, sustainable cities?**

A sustainable and healthy community includes ensuring public land stewardship, well-maintained forests, and safe access to recreation activities. I will leverage my existing relationships with state partners like the Public Works Board to maximize the leverage of CCA funds in support of affordable housing, green infrastructure, emergency preparedness, and digital equity.

**What initiatives do you plan to implement to enhance the connection between urban residents and public lands managed by the DNR?**

In 2023, the legislature directed DNR to focus on the urban/wildland boundary for wildfire preparedness and also smoke-readiness for underserved communities. Smoke-readiness and design for the environment in Washington's buildings and infrastructure are crucial for urban communities to become climate secure and resilient. This can include helping to fund urban forestry initiatives and conservation efforts, revegetation and restoration efforts of streams and watersheds, repurposing or reclaiming spaces used by cars for people and plants, and natural drainage systems for stormwater treatment retrofits or new construction.



**What steps will you take to ensure that communities historically marginalized or underserved have a voice in the management and use of public lands under the jurisdiction of the DNR?**

Powerful groups targeted for oppression should be represented inside and outside of DNR, including in leadership positions on staff and serving in policymaking roles. Specifically, these important community groups should have roles where their representative's input is not just accepted as "feedback," but advice and experience is acknowledged, acted upon, and cherished. This includes building strong relationships and partnerships within these communities and could include DNR staff going there in person to learn about public lands issues directly. Internally, hiring practices should be reviewed for barriers to application and hiring or volunteering to serve.

**What is your strategy on fire management and the labor rights (wages; career pathways; healthcare in perpetuity) of those doing that work, particularly fire fighters that are currently incarcerated?**

DNR's Correctional Camps Program allows incarcerated individuals opportunities to participate in workforce development and training in meaningful work in the fire service, earn a small gratuity or pay toward restitution, and is limited to individuals in minimum to medium security facilities. Specifically, in 2022 the State created a transitional workforce program as a career pathway for rehabilitation and reintegration that has only 20 people. If elected, the CCP program would be due for an important review and assessment of its effectiveness, wages, and benefits in order to work toward greater equity, while ensuring justice for victims of crimes.