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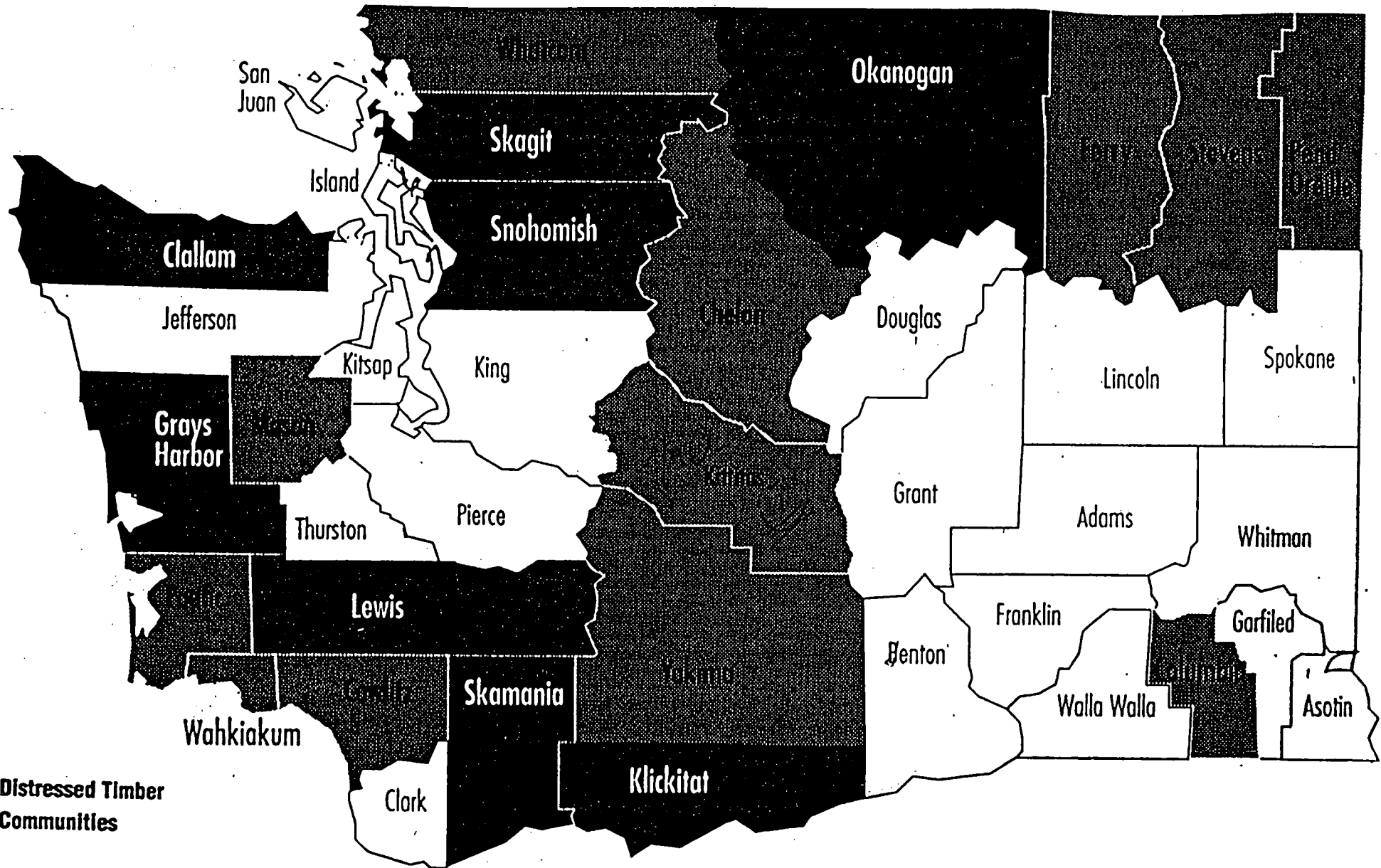
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[Washington State Counties and Communities - Coalitions for Forest Recovery] [Loose]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
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Washington State Timber Counties



**Distressed Timber
Communities**

Lower Impact

Higher Impact

WASHINGTON STATE COUNTIES AND COMMUNITIES BUILDING COALITIONS FOR FOREST RECOVERY

Our families and communities are working to find the harmony between protecting the long term health of our forests, air, waterways and wildlife, while preserving the unique cultural quality of a rural way of life as well as the people who depend on the forests.

GOAL

To foster and support partnerships from the local through the federal level to establish long-term harmony between ecology, economy and communities.

ECOLOGY

Develop ecosystem management policies across the landscape based on scientifically credible approaches to protect the long term health of our forests, air, waterways and wildlife.

- Establish concurrence on definitions and data to promote design and implementation of legally defensible forest plans.
- Employ findings from Olympic Experimental State Forest and the Olympic Natural Resource Center. Both have been unanimously approved by Congress.
- Streamline decision-making process within and between federal and state agencies, counties and other stakeholders.
- Protect sensitive areas by employing active management techniques to protect forests from fire, insects and disease.
- Establish federal forest, stream and recreation facilities restoration jobs as transitional family wage employment for displaced timber workers. These jobs should include some training or a career plan, so the employee is not dependent upon continued federal funding.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development

Any solution to this crisis requires using the skills and abilities of the people in the impacted communities. Over the past few years they have made great strides in making things work, but need federal support to make it work for the long term.

- Establish level and certainty of forest product supply, using both natural and planted second and third growth forests and new forestry techniques, allowing industry to plan and invest for the future. Establish certainty of supply during development of forest plans to keep industry and workers in place during transition.
- Provide certainty of ability to harvest as an incentive to **private** land owners to practice new ecologically sound forest management techniques.
- Promote and support the development of value-added wood products through research and development of value-added manufacturing techniques, which could be fostered by the development of local wood products business networks, cooperatives and a commodity commission.
- Provide federal support for the development of infrastructure to promote the expansion or development of business.
- Provide federal support for entrepreneur activities taking place in the communities. Funding for a value-added wood products incubator manufacturing/business/training development park in a rural community would jump-start many potential independent partnerships and industries.
- Protect forest land base from conversion to residential land in urban and rural counties and prevent further set asides in timber dependent communities.
- Promote and manage for sustainable yield of non-timber products, such as mushrooms, floral plants, etc.

Revolving Loan Funds/Capital Formation Vehicles:

Redlining and the uncertainty created by the timber crisis have cut off the life line of capital to rural timber towns. Capital is essential if communities are going to diversify and add value.

- Promote economic diversification through the establishment of a revolving loan fund or other appropriate capital formation vehicles to guarantee and leverage private loans.

Community Development

To strive for sustainable community development and diversification, the communities need federal funding to continue to make the creative programs they have developed work. However, we believe that any federal assistance should have local input to assure implementation of proper priorities and programs.

- Provide community training programs that prepare workers for family wage jobs with industry in the community.

Local Government Fiscal Support

Local governments in timber communities are facing severe long-term reductions in revenue and skyrocketing demand for services due to the timber crisis. Continued federal support is needed to help local governments meet the increasing demands of families and communities.

- Maintain federal forest payments to local government and schools to allow adequate provision for necessary public services both during the development of forest management policies and on a predictable long-term basis.
- Provide replacement of some of the decreased revenue from State and private forest lands for counties, schools, and junior taxing districts (hospitals, fire, police, etc.)

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Every community is a forest products dependent community.

Timber counties are also economically dependent on forest products.

You and I create the needs to which the forest industry responds. Our lives are nurtured by the commodities provided. Besides the obvious products - paper and building materials - you will find wood derivatives in our food, medicine and clothing. Consumers and producers are co-dependent. Let us acknowledge the responsibility we each have in the issue and work toward a solution in which new methods of managing the forest can be utilized to provide both fiber and protection.