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Information Sheet on December 1-4, 2007 Storm Event

- The event was actually three storms that converged on Washington State, starting with snow, then wind, then rain. The storms approached directly from the west, resulting in high winds over 80 mph sustained for 36 hours with Naselle Ridge clocking in at 147 mph.
- The first-ever hurricane warning for Washington was issued during this storm.
- The storm has presented a variety of challenges to the farmers, foresters and residents of southwest Washington, and focused the legislature on the storm-related issues such as flooding, forest practices and development.
- The Governor issued a state of emergency and 10 counties are eligible for assistance.
- Interstate 5 was closed for five days.
- Of the residents that were flooded in the Upper Chehalis basin, 60% were outside the 100-year FEMA flood zone.
- The latest information from the U.S. Geological Survey indicates that on December 3rd, the peak flow for the Chehalis River near the town of Doty reached 63,100 cubic feet per second (cfs), more than doubling the previous peak flow, in February 1996, of 28,900 cfs.
- The U.S. Geological Survey says a “500-year storm” caused the December flooding.
- There have been several industry-wide meetings with state officials to both assess the damage, and find ways to salvage and remove the wood that was either blown down or washed down the river.
- WFPA members rely on science to guide our forest practices and that the goal of forest practices is to not add to the natural rate of landslides – not prevent them.
- On January 28, Gov. Chris Gregoire created of a storm recovery task force to strengthen the focus and organization of the state’s storm relief efforts.
- While no estimates are available for the amount of blown down and broken timber that there is, the State DNR testified to 600-700 million board feet at a Senate Hearing on January 10, 2008.
- Commissioner Sutherland has worked with the Dept. of Agriculture, Ecology, Health, Fish & Wildlife and the Governor’s Office to coordinate efforts for woody debris removal off of farmers’ fields, at no cost to the landowners. A preliminary assessment by DNR shows 380 acres of fields with woody debris, mostly in the Boistfort vicinity, along the South Fork of the Chehalis River.