



# PRIVATE FOREST LANDOWNERS HELP FUND FIRE PROTECTION AND SUPPRESSION

Private forest landowners in Washington State share the responsibility of preparing for and fighting wildfires in our state.

## Forest Fire Protection Assessment

We pay Forest Fire Protection Assessments (FFPA) and share the preparedness costs for fighting wildland fires. Referred to as “protection” costs, these include the costs necessary to be prepared to fight a fire, as opposed to actually fighting the fire (those costs are referred to as “suppression costs”). Protection costs include purchasing fire engines, train crews, stage caches of equipment, etc.

## The Legislature Sets the FFPA Rate

The FFPA is a statutorily set assessment on forest landowners collected by the county treasurers through the property tax statement (see RCW 76.04.610). It has two components: a flat parcel charge plus an acreage charge. Nearly 472,000 private parcels (nearly 9.5 million acres) are assessed the FFPA on the owner’s property tax statement. Non-federal tax exempt lands (mainly state-owned lands) also pay the assessment, but the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) bills them directly. About 12.5 million acres (public and private) pay about \$9 million annually into the FFPA. FFPA revenue to the Department of Natural Resources is, on average, \$10 million a year.

Protection costs are statutorily required to be equitably shared between state contributions and landowners (see RCW 76.04.167). Suppression costs are paid with the state general fund and other sources.

## Landowner Contingency Fund

The LOC Fund pays for fire suppression costs on forest lands where the fire was started through normal landowner operations (see RCW 76.04.630). The DNR sets the assessment rate in order to maintain a statutorily required minimum LOC Fund balance of \$3 million. The assessments are similar in nature to the FFPA and also appear on the property tax statement for private landowners. About \$380,000 per year flow into the LOCF at the current rates.



In 2015 there were a significant number of wildland fires, and more than 1,000,000 acres were burned, resulting in back-to-back historical fire seasons. 2015 was the driest spring in over 100 years, with a snowpack that was only 14% of average. High-severity forest fires are increasing and hard to control due to increasing levels of dead and dying material in public forests and extreme weather conditions. A focused and coordinated effort will be required to tackle the compounding elements that results in these destructive and overwhelming wildland fires.

## FIRE CAUSE HISTORY

YEAR	ACRES BURNED ON DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES JURISDICTION LANDS, BY CAUSE									TOTAL ACRES
	LIGHTNING	INCENDIARY	RECREATION	SMOKERS	DEBRIS BURNS	LOGGING	CHILDREN	RAILROAD	MISCELLANEOUS	
2015	242,274.3	517.7	100.9	16.3	566.2	1.4	28.9	30.2	85,268.1	328,803.9
2014	265,713.1	23.9	143.3	23.5	500.4	2.5	23.4	0.2	48,703.9	315,134.1
2013	12,602.5	14.6	2,393.9	6.6	402.6	16.9	23.2	4.7	110,643.5	126,108.4
2012	31,425.1	274.5	977.8	165.7	1,104.8	5.4	20.2	0.2	34,360.0	68,333.7
2011	18.6	62.9	321.0	0.7	155.8	7.4	38.1	2.4	6,996.0	7,603.0
2010	2,397.4	43.6	177.6	2.8	153.6	60.5	4.2	0.2	22,647.1	25,487.0
2009	10,870.0	125.0	233.0	8.0	830.0	16.0	19.0	1.0	683.0	12,785.0
2008	1,518.0	12.0	1,018.0	22.0	2,217.0	15.0	20.0	4.0	27,854.0	32,680.0

Source: Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Resource Protection Division; [www.dnr.wa.gov](http://www.dnr.wa.gov).

## About the Washington Forest Protection Association

Founded in 1908, the Washington Forest Protection Association (WFPA) is a trade association representing large and small forest landowners and managers of nearly 4 million acres of productive working forestlands located in the coastal and inland regions of Washington State. Our members support rural and urban communities through the sustainable growth and harvest of timber and other forest products for U.S. and international markets. WFPA’s objective is to support balanced policies at the state and national levels which create an equilibrium between equitable costs, environmental protection and long-term regulatory certainty.

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